The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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OF RELIGION

Oscar Fisher Blackwelder:

UNDERSTANDING TRAGEDY

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VOL. XXIV, NO. 8 AUGUST 1953

By Ralph W. Loew

PREACHING FOR

THERE is an old tale of a grandfather recalling for his little Peterkin the exciting events of a battle that took place years ago. Brilliantly the old man would fight the yardage up the hill until at last he had planted the flag on the summit, then lean back for the adulation of the younger generation. But this little fellow would irreverently ask, "And what came of it, Grandfather?"

That irreverent question pokes its head above the horizon to taunt the conscientious pastor. He is engaged in an art, in passionate writing; he is an essayist, a poet, an interpreter. This and much more. For here, as has been recounted through the years, is truth expressed through personality. Once again the Word becomes flesh. We who are engaged in this craft find ourselves in the race, yet pointing out the goals; in the drama, yet we are critics; in the struggle, yet everlastingly indicating its purpose. That requires insight of the rarest sort.

A Jury Box

We are concerned today about the evangelistic function of preaching. We not only reveal the Word, we confront men with this eternal truth, stab their consciences, woo them to love, encourage them in the struggle, everlastingly pull them up to what God wants them to be. Preaching is like that.

It was on a Sunday in Buffalo that we discussed this for a moment. Franklin Clark Fry was speaking at a Reformation festival. The stage was set to remind the audience of a churchly chancel. While a hymn was sung we noted that the pulpit, which looked quite imposing to the audience, could be recognized from the stage as a converted registry stand from a funeral parlor. Just over its reading desk were the words, "Please Register." Laughing about it afterward, we discussed whether we'd put those words on every pulpit in America. Yet we decided not to do it. For the preacher is not registering a point of view from his own particular vantage point. He is instead pleading for a verdict. Or, as Oscar Blackwelder has said so many times, "He is not on a soapbox; he is before a jury box."

Ecclesiastical Exercise

This is preaching—evangelistic preaching—for evangelistic preaching is not saccharin sentiment, or emotional splurge, or irrational nonsense. It is the gentle, persuasive portrayal of the living Word until men see him. As Shaw described preaching: "Some is like wine with color and sparkle and no permanent good. Some is like coffee, stimulating but never nourishing. Some is like carbonated water, much fuss over nothing. And some is like spring water, very good, but hard to get." We who preach know that meaning. We confront the peril of parochialism, the burden of familiarity, the enormity of the problem of communication and the lack of cohesiveness between pulpit and pew. All of these are deterrents to the verdict. They leave the preaching as though it were an ecclesiastical exercise, something to be seen through but hardly necessary.

To those who would win a verdict, this is the moment to sound the death knell of professionalism in the pulpit. We are not artists to be protected, coming from heights on a Sunday to preach and then retiring to some secluded spot. A pastor is a friend-at-large, and that attitude has to shine through the whole of his ministry. Men are won by the fact that here is one who cares, in whom the warmth of God's Spirit moves and broods until they have seen what he has seen. Said Jeremiah, "I sat where they sat." To look over the congregation, to know these people and their problems, their hidden hopes and aspirations, we need to know the men and women who live in this world.

Integrated Faith

George Buttrick once pointed out that to sit in a plane and sense the enormous wingspread, the power of the engines and the vastness of this mechanical wonder is to gain a sense of power. But when a man is heartbroken, when a person is

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A Noted Lutheran Pastor Deals with the Heart of Great Preaching

A VERDICT

calloused to the shame of sin, when social injustices mock every semblance of godliness, what plane can be measured over against that need of power? Then it is that every syllable of the preacher's words brings that sense of companionship which Bonhoffer felt as he faced execution:

> While all the powers of God aid and attend us,
> Boldly we'll face the future be it what may,
> At even and at morn God will befriend us.

Preaching for a verdict requires that the preacher himself shall have an integrated faith. In fact, he must be a theologian. There has been a swing toward religion in recent years, at once hopeful and dangerous. Hopeful in that it indicates a hunger; dangerous if we preachers are not prepared to feed that hunger.

Dedicated Imagination

From time to time there are preachers who state that they are not theologians. That is similar to a doctor who would say he is not aware of anatomy because he is not a specialist. If we don't have an integrated theology, who will have one? "Religion," says Whitehead, "is the vision of something that stands beyond, and behind, and within the passing flux of things—something which is real and something yet waiting to be realized; something which is remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts; something which gives meaning to all that passes and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is final good and yet beyond all reach; something which is ultimate ideal and hopeless quest."

Preaching for a verdict is not the announcement of dogmatic principles *per se*. It is the communication of these principles into the area of life. It is the revelation to a person that he has accepted certain dogmas which were announced by the world and made them the verdict for his life. Men and women are won in many ways to examine the demands and proclamations of the Christian faith. They need to find something more than the personality of the preacher, the strength of a particular congregational organization. Otherwise the last state of such men is worse than the first.

When William Slade, butler to Abraham Lincoln, recounted stories of the days of the Civil War, he included one concerning an elderly Negro who came each morning to the White House with an empty basket. The President noticed the old fellow and asked William who he was, urging that he be brought in should he come again. The next morning William greeted the old man and took him in to see the President. "Why do you come each day with your empty basket?" asked Lincoln. "Well sir, you see, sir, it's this way, sir," answered the nervous old man. "I'se hear'd that the Constitution has got provisions for all people and I'se come for mine." Many of us have thought of Christianity in such terms—a basket filled with miscellaneous provisions such as the Ten Commandments, the 13th Chapter of Corinthians and an assortment of moral and ethical statements. Citizenship, religious and secular, is more than this. It is the understanding of the very stuff of life, the meaning of this faith, and an integrated whole whereby the preacher can relate this message to the situations in which men and women live each day.

Preaching for a verdict is preaching that must be truth interpreted by dedicated imagination. In this sense evangelistic preaching is no different from any other kind of preaching. It is the use of imagination to see oneself in the situations in which people are concerned and there to see the love of God at work. In this connection Ralph Sockman once said: "If our broken world would be more brotherly it would seem to need more imagination than information. The mere increase of facts about other races and nations does not guarantee understanding. Only as we sensitize our imagination by cultivating the art of putting ourselves in other's places do we come to feel how life would look to those of different color, creed and culture." This Jesus did. This the preacher must do.

Sense of Accuracy

A fine statement was made by Loyal H. Larimer on one occasion to a group of his students at Hamma Divinity School. "Boys," he said, "an illustration is a window and a window is something to look through. You need windows for your sermons. Remember, however, when you build a sermon you are not building a greenhouse."

We need also the sense of accuracy, in both statements and thinking. We preach to all kinds of men, in varying professions. The use of material unfamiliar to the preacher, of vague generalizations, or of ideas twisted by inaccuracies is unforgivable. It alienates the listener and puts a roadblock on the path of a man's progress.

Paul Scherer quotes a case in point. He tells of a soldier who had received a letter from his pastor in which a familiar hymn was quoted as follows:

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there are those who suffer;
I would be brave, for there are those that dare;
I would be friend to all, the poor and friendless;

There the soldier came up short, shocked, for he recognized the inaccuracy. The original hymn read:

I would be friend to all—the foe, the friendless;

That inaccuracy stopped him, for it was twisting the meaning of the gospel, and stripping the right to freedom from the pulpit. If the pulpit stays free, it does so because the occupant of the pulpit recognizes his sense of freedom, his need for accuracy, and his respect for this obligation to his God and his fellowman.

If preaching is to win the verdict of men for God and his kingdom, it will not be because we have spoken for 22 minutes and called it a sermon. Rather it will be because a soul has been laid hold on by the great disciplines of the Almighty and won to a faith which, as Paul said, "You have seen in me."

When President Eisenhower was still performing his duties as the General of the Army he spoke to his fellow officers as follows:

> The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army. It is possible to give commands in such a manner as to inspire an intense desire to obey; while the opposite manner cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey. The one mode or the other springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due in others cannot fail to inspire in them regard for himself; while he who feels disrespect towards others cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself.

If this is true in the organization of the army it is much more true in the profession of preaching. He who is bankrupt in his own devotional life will never inspire others to great prayer. He who is poverty stricken in his own sense of awareness to the enormous problems of life will never startle another's conscience. He who is unable to feel for himself the hurts of life cannot woo another to great sympathies. That discipline which has laid its hand upon the soul of a preacher until he is a whole person will encourage another to aspire to a similar wholeness.

In a real sense we who would preach for a verdict are those who must lay bare the problems of this world that men may see them in contrast to the eternal Word of God. When that happens we are at the place where a man can consider a verdict. Somewhere he must be permitted to make that decision. Somehow he must confront the definite need. Somehow he must find his way. Or, to use the words of the Danish theologian Rentener, "It is our duty to relate the revelance of the gospel to the unfaithful faithful."

Lutheran Number

Our August issue this year is devoted to sermons by pastors of various Lutheran bodies who received the highest number of nominations from our readers. Names of additional Lutheran ministers who were high in the list of nominations appear in 'For the Record' on Page 31.

For August 1954, our readers will be invited to nominate* Presbyterian *ministers from whom sermons will be selected.—The Editors.

Prayer for a Hospital Dedication

By Arthur Preston Colbourn

Pastor, First Congregational Church, Pawtucket, R. I.

O LORD, as we gather at this time of dedication:
We ask thy blessing upon the promise and expectancy of this day.
May its promise quicken our efforts to do thy will;
May its expectancy strengthen our efforts to practice thy presence.

We pray, O God, for this institution of healing and prevention,
And for all who have part in its enduring and on-going life.
May they ever have the humility of learners,
The trust of believers,
And the skill of the gently wise.
May they not only heal, but also bless;
And be worthy followers of the Good Physician,
And worthy citizens of this community of memory and hope—
Ever mindful of its long memories,
And ever confident of its longer hopes.

O thou who hast bound us together in this bundle of life,
We thank thee for all those who dwell among us
And make the world a better place because they live and serve,
Giving of their time, their talent and their treasure.
As others have labored, and we are entered into their labors,
So discipline us to a like generosity of mind and heart;
And save us from passing by on the other side of the widespread need of the world;
In the name of the God and Father of us all. Amen.

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Toward an Understanding of Tragedy

By Oscar Fisher Blackwelder

For our knowledge is imperfect. . . . For now we see in a mirror dimly. I Corinthians 13:9, 12.

TO TRY to find out what is going on in this tragic world and share in it is life.

In this mysterious universe about us is a calming, restoring power. But if there be the power of healing, there is also the fact and possibility of tragedy.

Where, for example, do droughts and floods fit into a world created and sustained by One we call Father? There are physical explanations, of course, but the artistic, human, moral, spiritual sense of man is not satisfied with physical explanations alone. Where does a cyclone, or tornado, or war—in which those least guilty appear to suffer most—fit into a world that has a God of love?

The Creator's commission to man seems to have included a challenge to the human family to overcome those acts of nature that do so much to make this world difficult. So man has built dikes to hold back the cruelties of floods. Irrigation has made the cruelty of the desert blossom like the rose. Giant ocean liners have conquered much of the cruelty of the seas. Governments working on security for aged and underprivileged are battling the cruelties of the economic order. Science has gone far in conquering the cruelties of disease.

Security Is not Guaranteed

Yet this world, it would seem, was never intended to be a place where one cannot fail, where physical and financial security are guaranteed. Unless there is the possibility of failure, there can be no personal growth; were there not possibility of loss, there would be no moral choice; remove the possibility of tragedy and there can be no spiritual awareness. Written into the structure of the world is what might be called "The Principle of Tragedy," because this life of ours has moral significance. By this principle I mean there is a power working in men and nature which can break a man's life, defeat him, make a tragedy out of him. Let us call it sin in human nature and cruelty in physical nature—both enter into a working principle that no social setting ever can be expected fully to control.

Consider, in the first place, that this principle of tragedy is observable in and illustrated by the fact that every normal life sooner or later has crosses to bear, frequently in the form of permanent handicaps, burdens that often appear very unfair.

Handling Life's Crosses

There are, for example, the crosses that come to a man because of his own limitations in life—inherited tendencies that do much to cause poor management; poor judgment in assuming foolish risks; poor moral insights in violating the best conscience of society, forgetting that we always reap more than we sow. These we might call man's *unnecessary* crosses.

Then there are those crosses that come to every life more or less severely because we live in an imperfect world. These crosses are caused by the limitation of environment; they are the outcome of human friction and the presence of evil in life. These crosses may come to us after we have done our best and have achieved considerable personal excellence. They are the natural result of life's experiences, for they arise out of situations over which the average man has little or no control. They are physical, like tornadoes, and personal, like war and unemployment. These we might call man's *inevitable* crosses.

Because of these unnecessary and inevitable crosses, a man who believes he owes anything to the world beside pulling his own weight finds himself choosing a third kind of cross—life's *voluntary* crosses. Thoughts like these have moved his conscience: "Bear one another's burdens." "We who are strong ought to bear the failings of the weak." "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." In this kind of a world a man with no crosses is missing life altogether. So my first observation is that this principle of tragedy in men and nature is illustrated by the fact that every normal life earlier or later must bear its crosses.

But, what are we going to do with these crosses which most of us recognize as old acquaintances? I conceive three possible answers.

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The first reaction toward life's crosses is to try to *resist* them. This may take the form of direct opposition, which is rebellion. Or it may be passive resistance, which means to bear with them.

A second reaction is to try to *ignore* them. This may mean pure indifference, the shrug of the shoulder, which, of course, is only postponing the inevitable. Trying to ignore crosses may also take the form of rationalization to the point of denying that crosses exist at all.

We may try to resist or ignore, but the third reaction I believe is the way of Jesus and that is to *use crosses as keys to the larger, more abundant life.* Two of his most widely quoted sayings illustrate, I believe, his point of view. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." He also said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." In other words, Jesus is saying that abundant living and crosses go together. How does that make sense? He recognized that capacity for living and that for suffering are the same capacity. How we handle suffering, therefore, increases or decreases our capacity for life.

Other religious teachers do not face these facts. "They shrink back from the fulness of life in order to escape its pain." They teach that the happy or blessed life is one that does not suffer. Even the Old Testament would have us believe that when a righteous man suffered it was *in spite of his righteousness.* Jesus teaches that a man suffers *because of his righteousness,* that the more fully he develops his capacity for life, the more he practices righteousness, the greater is his capacity for suffering. Jesus could promise, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Instruments of Discipline

So our lives have crosses. The way of Christ is to make these crosses, keys and clues instruments of self-discipline, methods of moral maturity, the spiritual way of developing capacity for the abundant life.

But there must follow a third inquiry. We have seen what Jesus taught, but what did he actually do with his own crosses? Peter says, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten." And on the greatest cross he ever bore, as they were putting it into the ground and his flesh was in greatest agony, he prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." At least we can follow afar off.

Many great souls are turning beds of affliction into mounts of transfiguration. Some of the world's greatest poetry is only the story of a great heart that has been broken but carries on and lets us hear the secret. Some of the earth's grandest music is a lonely soul's search for the lost chords of life —a search that in the finding has set to melody the world's soul. Many a man is taking a second best and making a life out of it because the first plan of his youth now hangs upon the cross of a broken dream.

I like the story Elbert Russell tells of the grandmother, sitting at the head of the Thanksgiving Day dinner table, with her fifty children, grandchildren and great grandchildren around her. She had been a pioneer's daughter, and her hands were horny with physical toil, for she had helped to clear a farm in the wilderness and then worked on it after the clearing. Her face was wrinkled with hardship, care and sorrow. Ten times she had known the perils of childbirth. She had seen her parents, her husband and one child taken from her. She had shared the rearing of children to the third generation. Indeed, she carried on her heart the burden of the fifty around that Thanksgiving table. But no one who saw her that day pitied her. She had something they did not have. She had a fulness others there present could not have at their age. She had dared much, she had given much, she had lost much, she had suffered much—so she had lived much. Her life was overflowing while many at her age are empty.

The Power of Christ's Cross

She reminds me of another old lady who was receiving congratulations on her birthday. Someone said to her, "My, you are beautiful." Without a moment's hesitation or embarrassment she replied, "I ought to be. I'm 74." Such beauty is not decorative. It is structural.

It makes me think of Philip Battell and the poem written about him in his 90th year:

> Ninety, and yet we never thought him old,
> Who knew him in that autumn of his youth;
> The courteous heart, the spirit never cold
> To beauty and to truth.
>
> And memory so recalls him not with tears,
> But rather with rejoicing that he went,
> Bearing beneath the burden of the years
> A soul so little bent.

The quality of the cross is in living like that great grandmother, like the 74-year-old woman, and like Dr. Battell.

But the cross of Christ is not alone the supreme *example* of the way to handle our crosses and thus to deal with the principle of tragedy. There must be a fourth consideration in our study. Is there a power or energy released through the cross by which we may bear our crosses according to his example?

I believe the principle of tragedy largely accounts for the persistence of the cross of Christ. That is why men are not content with Jesus simply as the clue to God and the spiritual world, the most trustworthy guide to moral insights and values, only the mirror of the Eternal, the chief religious teacher and greatest of the prophets. The principle of tragedy will not let them stop there.

If the cross were only the story of a man hanging on a beam of wood, giving his life for what he deeply loved, sacrificing his all for what he believed, any good newspaper reporter could tell that story in a few paragraphs. In fact, history is filled with such martyrs and in the passing of most of them humanity didn't miss a heartbeat. I believe it is Frederick W. Norwood who says that

rosses are as familiar on the road of history as ak leaves in autumn. What makes the cross of Christ different?

For one thing, men have believed that Jesus' hoice of the cross in a world filled with crosses s God's way of saying that he suffers *when, as* and *f* man suffers; that he is not a remote spectator ut that the world's struggle is his very life; that othing can separate men from his love; that the ross is God's heart suffering in public. The cross bove all else has encouraged men to believe the salmist's words: "Even though I walk through he valley of the shadow . . . thou art with me." Bethlehem, which means the entrance of the ternal into human life and history, would have nly a limited meaning unless God touched life at ts most difficult point, namely, the place of ragedy. There is power in all great fellowship ut supremely in the fellowship of his suffering. t is of that fellowship George Matheson sings: 'O *Love* that wilt not let me go."

If God only suffers when man suffers, a man night be very pessimistic. God suffering? Then ven eternity is a veil of tears. But notice that the ross which assures us of the fellowship of God is *mpty*. It says, he really suffered but that is not ll. Both empty cross and open tomb cry out to the vorld's struggling heart: He has conquered trag-dy. He has overcome the world. He sees life hrough—beyond tragedy.

Fellowship of Christ

Because God is in Christ, suffering with us riumphantly, there is a third power released hrough him. It is what makes Jesus such a com-elling personality and that is how he deals with nan's hardest cross of all—a guilty conscience nd the sense of remorse. Jesus here has a power ot even claimed by another—the right to say to nen, "Your sins are forgiven." Forgiveness is the ealing power of God which opens up to every villing man the endless life. The Psalmist's words re indeed come true. "He restores my soul."

But there is a fourth power in the cross which ask you to notice intimately as I close. Jesus said, That you may know that the Son of man has uthority on earth to forgive sins . . . rise, take up our pallet and go home." That seems to say, Arise; I restore unto you your self-respect, go out nd face life unafraid. Take up your bed; I give ou the ability to carry your part of the world's vork. Go into your house; I make it possible for ou to resume your normal family and social life. n other words, forgiveness of Christ is the source f the good life beyond tragedy.

So there is God's fellowship in tragedy; there is is triumphant life to overcome tragedy; there is is forgiveness to heal lives broken by tragedy; here is his power to carry on in a good life beyond ragedy.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

THE YOUNG BLAZE

A Sermon for Children

By Helen L. Toner

"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation." Matthew 26:41.

NOT long ago a young man was caught while trying to flee from a postoffice that he had robbed of several hundred dollars. His pastor visited him in prison and asked: "Roy, when did you begin to steal?"

Roy said, "I guess I began when I was in the first grade. One day I took some pennies from my brother's bank to buy some candy. He didn't miss them, so I never put them back as I'd intended to. Then I began to take pencils from the fellows' desks and change from the girls' pockets in the coatroom. None of the things I took seemed important at the time, but the habit kept growing on me, and here I am."

It is surprising how some little wrong fast turns into a big one. The secretary who lost her job this week for being careless and untidy began to be that way in grammar school, and the habit of not doing her work well and of not caring how she looked grew into a big hindrance to her happiness. The business man caught cheating the shareholders in his company began cheating when he looked at his neighbor's test paper for an answer he didn't know, and the habit grew.

The way in which habits of laziness, selfishness and dishonesty grow out of our control reminds us of a forest fire. A match is dropped near a pile of brush. It smoulders at first, then bursts into flame. In a few minutes it gets hot enough to set fire the green timber, and before long a whole forest is ablaze.

Just recently many bad forest fires have been prevented by a new kind of watchfulness. When a tiny curl of smoke is sighted by a ranger from a high tower, a plane is sent out at once with several men dressed in protective steel helmets and padded suits. These men, equipped with parachutes, are dropped on this "young" forest fire, and with shovels and axes they are able to conquer a small blaze which in an hour or so could not be put out by a hundred men.

We might apply this method of fighting forest fires while they are still small to getting rid of bad habits which, if allowed to grow, may later bring us and those we love real unhappiness. First we must develop a new kind of watchfulness—a watchfulness that detects the very beginnings of an undesirable habit. Then we must get at that habit and put it out of business before it has half a chance to get beyond our control.

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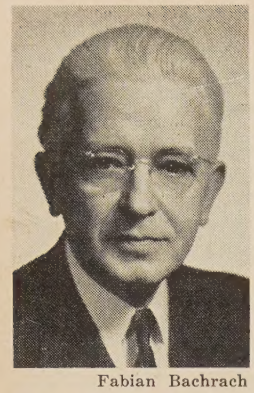

Fabian Bachrach

The Tamest of Passions

By Paul E. Scherer

Colossians 1:9-13.

I want to speak to you of those moments—if indeed no more—which I dare say come to all of us, when the zest seems to slip out of the Christian faith; and whatever it is that's left must call itself *faith* by courtesy and *Christian* from habit. It can't make heads or tails of the noun, and wonders what there is about the adjective to put a glint in anybody's eye.

The text is from the prayer that Paul used to offer for these people at Colossae. You should study it. He always knew what to pray for. He knew that for some of them the salt had begun to lose its savor. Little groups, meeting in houses, talking in the market place, chatting two by two, arm in arm on the streets, had begun to have their doubts about Christianity. In their exciting world, after all, wasn't it pretty dull? You couldn't exactly care for it any more—not as you once did. It didn't have quite as much appeal as the mystery religions of the East. There now was something to whip up any man's jaded taste! A dash of Greek philosophy to make everything intellectually respectable; a touch of Oriental speculation—very satisfying emotionally; a generous sprinkling of Jewish asceticism—the kind of rigorous self-discipline that everybody knows is morally most stimulating, fairly packed with vitamins. What a dish!

Swelling Music

And from his prison at Rome, maybe at Ephesus, the apostle tells the Colossians how it is with him. He tells them of the glory forever burning in his mind. He wants to kindle it again in theirs. He tells them of the joy endlessly at home in his heart, swelling like organ music. You can't miss the sound of it: "Filled with the knowledge of his will . . . to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work . . . strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who . . . has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."

No Spring in the Step

It's almost a doxology, and I wonder how many of us feel like joining in? Or is this religion of ours, on the whole, just a stupid business, day after day; if not stupid, at least humdrum, with not much lilt in it anywhere; nothing to keep your heels from coming down flat on the pavement when you start out after breakfast; and when you come home for dinner at night, no spring in your step?

And it isn't just a mood. It comes too near to being a kind of all-pervading atmosphere! Some years ago Will Durant wrote an open letter to a few of his famous contemporaries. He had seen what was happening to religion, what we had allowed science to do for us; until as a result civilization seemed to be toppling over into chaos, threatening with barbarism all our happy dreams of a brave new world. And he didn't know the answer. "What is the meaning of human life?" he wrote. "Thought seems to have destroyed itself. Knowledge has brought disillusion. Truth has not made us glad. Why did we hurry so to find it? It has taken from us every reason for existence except the moment's pleasure and tomorrow's trivial hope."

Eugene O'Neill wrote *The Ice Man Cometh*, and Walter Lippmann joined in the chorus, telling us of brilliant atheists who had become very nervous; of women who, emancipated from the tyranny of homes and with the intermittent but expensive help of the psychoanalyst, were enduring liberty at last as interior decorators; of young men who were world weary at 22; of crowds enfranchised by the blood of heroes who could not be persuaded to take an interest in their destiny. These, said he, are the prisoners who have been released. They ought to be serene. The prison door is wide open. And they stagger out into trackless space under a blinding sun. In that world naziism sprang up like a weed. It sprang out of those noisome depths. Hitler knew that men and women who were fed to the gills with the whole sorry mess were ready

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o take a chance on anything. And there are others vho know it. That's what we must contain if we vant to contain communism! And the Christianity vith which we are familiar is by and large simply io match for it.

Most of us are a decent sort. America is a Chris-ian nation—half and half anyhow. Of course here are slums in Harlem. Half the people of the globe and more are victims of tyranny and starva-ion. Just on the edge of our lives and further away than thought can reach, there is incredible ragedy. We know that. And the prospect is not oo good. Nobody can be sure of anything much. The future, even day after tomorrow, is your guess and my guess. About all we can say is, "I believe n God the Father Almighty," and so on through he rest of it: Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, Good Friday, Easter, the Holy Spirit, the church —things like that, from childhood. And there's comfort in them. But this violent paroxysm of the Psalmist, what does it *mean?*

> My soul longs, yea, faints
> for the courts of the Lord;
> My heart and flesh sing for joy
> to the living God.

Not many of us can honestly claim that there's any such turmoil inside of us. It's all right as poetry.

At Half-Mast

If you're ever inclined to laugh at it, there has o be a sob in your laughter every time you think of this perfectly ridiculous little Jew, cooped up n jail, writing his letters, flinging them around as if they might amount to something! He said one day that God had turned the years into a con-tant pageant for him; then went on to pass the vhole parade in review: "Five times I have re-eived at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes ess one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been ship-vrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift t sea." Listen to the bands playing: "On frequent ourneys, in danger from rivers, dangers from obbers, . . . in the city, danger in the wilderness." Then the tramping of feet: "In toil and hardship, hrough many a sleepless night, in hunger and hirst, often without food, in cold and exposure." And he was trying all along to get rid of some horn in his flesh, with no answer from God but his: "My grace is sufficient for you." A level upful it was, no more. "Sufficient"—that was all. Except that when the promise had been made good, ll back and forth around the rim of that Mediter-anean world, it seemed to Paul like a rushing orrent: "The grace of our Lord flooded my life."

Do you suppose any of us could manage to hoist he flag again, instead of flying it at half-mast? What the apostle really says in this prayer of his or the people of Colossae is that they have come o feel as they do about the Christian faith, lost he thrill of it, started looking about for something nore exciting, because for one thing they have run ff from what knowledge they had of the will of God, and so quit "bearing fruit in every good work."

What flattens out Christianity for most people, and their own lives with it, is that they either resentfully refuse or thoughtlessly neglect to associate the merry-go-round of human existence with the will of God. No wonder it isn't merry any more; it only goes round now. They plod through the same old routine day after day, with the same old strain pulling on the muscles, and the same old worry plucking at the sleeve. The chief end of man may be, as the little boy said, "to glorify God and enjoy himself forever." But it's one thing to glorify God by throwing a bridge across the Hudson, for instance; that's conceivable. It's another thing to glorify him in the back hall with a broom. That isn't imagination: that's sentimentality. Besides, whoever in a world like ours can fool himself into believing that even when he *is* fruitful of a good work or two it's going to matter very much? Good or bad, nothing notable seems to come of it; while

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day.

Certainly the way to get one foot at least out of that bog is to quit taking for granted, uncritically, such pale and sallow-faced nonsense. Granted the smothering nightmare of little jobs, and the ruin they can work in human life, the Bible yet does its best for a man, page after page after page. Maybe it *is* emancipation he needs. The charter of it is there. But maybe he needs to understand first that both before and after the shackles are off there is a will which can turn every bit of what he does into a sacrament, and provide him with things he never thought of doing, to lift the stature of his soul! There's the nub of it.

God's Will

Karl Barth has much to say of the strange new world we seem to enter the minute we open the Bible—new and strange simply because it's a world that's inhabited and not empty; instinct with God, nothing like the place we live in, where little is little, and big is big, and 90 per cent of almost everything is nothing! Where Abraham lived you didn't pack up and move on the first of May. You went out, not knowing whither, looking for a city which had foundations. Isaac lived there, with God moving around among his plans to marry; and Jacob lived there, with God turning up one night by the side of a river. Read it all. You call it the history of salvation. You think it had something to do with an infinite mind and the yearning of an eternal heart. All right. But

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Coming

The September issue of The Pulpit will carry a feature article by Clayton T. Griswold, 'Television Tests the Minister.'

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strip it the next time you read it. Strip it as we strip our life, with that mind away somewhere, and that heart a grand Perhaps. Instead of keeping it all up there, the way things used to be, bring it all down here, the way things are now, where a sower sowing his seed is a sower sowing his seed, where a dead sparrow is a dead sparrow, and the man on the street wants to know who on earth cares, or in heaven either; and towers fall, and people build houses on the rock, and nothing is a parable. What has God to do with any of it? Read it that way, this afternoon, and you'll be back in the world to which you've grown accustomed. It's flat, and it's monotonous, and it's intolerable, and it makes people sick. Why on earth don't we gather up our things and get out of it?

It isn't a desert, unless we make it so—a dead stillness all around, its lone and level sands asking nothing, holding nothing, promising nothing, like some insane devil watching you with its staring eyes. It's the place where all of them lived, there in the Book. But when they looked they saw something. And when they listened they heard something. That's the only difference. Something *God* wanted of them: and they got their fingers on it and went through with it, laid it down with a tired sigh at night, and went to sleep. We run out of faith because we run out of love, "bearing fruit in every good work." And we run out of love because we run out of *God,* and "the knowledge of his will."

Patience amid Difficulties

But let's move on, get another foot out of the bog. The phrase now is "strengthened with all power, . . . for all endurance and patience." Patience! He's talking about the courage to hold on—even when everybody else is going to pieces—and not let go, and not give way, staying right where you are. I look out of my window at the George Washington bridge. I love to watch it in a storm, with the wind blowing and the waters all churned up. And I love to think of a life like that, with its traffic moving! Paul's maybe. Or somebody in a wheel chair next door or across the street, who can't be whipped. He's talking about courage, not cowardice—red courage, with the steady strain on it. Endurance! He's talking about the great heart inside of a man that doesn't know what it is to sneer at life and snap back at the things that go wrong. There is no gloominess in that heart, and there's no sourness in it: that's why he says, "endurance and patience with joy." He knew the other kind! Nothing but "a buoyant sense of mastery," and nobody can look down his nose at it! That's romance!

The difficulties Paul faced were part of it. They helped to whet his appetite. Possibly it isn't so silly after all! He never spoke lightly of the rough places, or wasted any time pointing out the "bright details in other parts of the landscape." Carlyle used to charge Emerson with doing too much of that: called it a cheap and easy and dishonest optimism; said he was like some fellow away up on the beach "chattily throwing a cheery word o two to poor souls wrestling for their lives in grea dark deeps, with thundering billows knocking th breath out of them." Paul knew what tha wrestling is, and how tired people grow. A frien of mine called me up one day, his job gone, and hi wife gone—he had found her dead on the floor— and 65 years of his life gone. It was just too much What was there that could keep him going? Pau knew how utterly beyond all reason life seems a times, so that you simply stand there and foo around with your hands. But he knew too tha there is something inside of us—there was some thing inside of him, and inside of my friend— which is forever wanting to match itself agains the odds, thrusting at all there is in the worl that tries to stop us; and when there isn't any thing left to hold off at arm's length, or climb over we either invent something or turn on the radi or television set because we are bored to death!

Maintaining Spiritual Vigor

That's why the New Testament doesn't addres itself to any of your puny virtues, asking of yo what you can do by turning your hand. It ad dresses itself to all your chivalry and valor an dreams of greatness. A first-rate artist once re marked that if you wanted to paint a picture o Christianity you'd have to show a meek and age woman leading a child into a pew by candlelight And a first-rate poet chimed in: "Thou hast con quered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown gre from thy breath." But somehow, there in the Gos pels, that doesn't seem to be what's done it! Th world has grown gray—but not from the breat of this Jesus who keeps looking at us, alway speaking to the hidden grandeur in our souls, t what we are not, and want to be, and may yet on day become! Taking what little loyalty he can fin and shaking it free of everything else until in desperate world it is holding on grimly to Go with its finger tips. Taking the love men offer hin and squeezing out of it all the dripping adjectives to leave it lean and taut, ready for the fire or th sword or the cross! Getting faith to tense it muscles. Maybe that's all it needs to keep fron going stale!

With this to top it off—or to undergird all of it which is better still—"Giving thanks to the Father who . . . has delivered us from the dominion o darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom o his beloved Son." In a world where everythin mattered, because God hadn't gone away and lef anything; in a world where all he had, up to th level, not of their need, but of what they wer ready to take and use, was held out to them; in world where above all else he had willed and don this incredible thing on a cross that was the turn ing point of human history—you couldn't fly flag at half-mast any more, not even theologically

Every once in a while we seem to come out o our theology worse off than Hamlet, some of us "The time is out of joint," he said; and so sa we all of us. The trouble with the so-called liberal is that they don't know how far out! But Hamle

had something to add: "O cursed spite, That ever I was born to set it right!" He at least had an idea that he could! Some of us with our new orthodoxy don't know. That's a pretty liberal view of things, isn't it? He didn't exactly usher in the kingdom of God, did he? With Ophelia dead, and Laertes dead, and the king dead, and the queen dead, and Hamlet himself dead, what was it precisely that he set right? But if you ask that question, you don't understand life as Shakespeare understood it. And you don't understand tragedy. The very essence of tragedy is that you can bear to see the curtain go down on that last scene and know that this is not failure! Something is right now that was wrong before. No tit for tat nonsense. Something profound in the universe that's worth all the waste!

Meaning of Life

Far, far more deeply and truly, it was that way on Calvary. "Delivered from the dominion of darkness"—and all of us still here in the middle of it? "Transferred to the kingdom of his dear Son"—and so little sweetness and light? What's the answer? The answer is that this world isn't a place where you can whistle a jaunty tune, as if every story were bound to have a happy ending, and everything at the last could be wrapped all up in a neat bundle and put away on a tidy shelf. Too much whistling is nervousness, anyway. But this world is a place where we can sing the hymn "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne" and have it make sense. Remember how altogether inconsistent the second line seems: "Ye nations, bow with sacred joy." The awful throne and the sacred joy hardly belong together, do they? Not until you have met in Christ all the goodness and severity there is on earth out of heaven, the beauty and the terror of life, its mystery and its majesty.

Then you, like Paul, will be stumbling on some doxology down every familiar road. Paul is walking along, wrestling with the weakness in himself, dismayed by the war that's going on inside of him, "Wretched man that I am," when all at once he turns a corner and finds Another, stronger than he, ahead of him, waiting there. "I thank God"—and the disjointed bits fall into a pattern: The sufferings of this present time, every creature, and all things as God works in them for good together with them that love him.

If you don't care about it—this vast glory of Christ, these strange verses about a cross and an empty tomb, so strangely true of every life that wills it to be, because it *was* true of that life, all of it set here in the world's face—if you don't care about it, there's no use paying any attention to Paul, or even listening to him. But if you do—well, the Japanese have a very lovely way with their trees: they train and shape and force the trunks and branches into delicate patterns, coaxing the most unimagined harmonies out of nature, as if she were a huge instrument for them to play on. If you care enough, it can twist back into some beauty every ugly thing there is. Even your failures! Even death!

Walk Softly

YOUR color is different from mine. Out of your sorrow and your hope, tender music for us all—

"Listen to the lambs all a-crying."
"Deep river, my home is over Jordan."

Let us walk softly together, speak gently, and make the earth beautiful.

Your creed is different from mine. From your adoration and your trust, inspiration for us all—

The holy faces of your madonnas.
The glorious lives of your saints.

Let us walk softly together, speak gently, and make the earth beautiful.

Your race is different from mine. From your wisdom and your faith, deathless words for us all—

"The Lord is my Shepherd."
"He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

Let us walk softly together, speak gently and make the earth beautiful.

JEAN MITCHELL BOYD.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

ROBERT G. TUTTLE, Broad Street Methodist, Statesville, N. C. "Mature, Yet Immature." Hebrews 6:3—*This we will do if God permits.*

CHARLIE W. SHEDD, First Presbyterian, Ponca City, Okla. "Are You a Good Forgetter?" Phil. 3:13—*Forgetting what lies behind.*

ANDREW PERRIN BURTON, First Baptist, Rensselaer, N. Y. "Christ Above All." Col. 1:17-18—*He is before all things, and by him all things consist: . . . That in all things He might have the pre-eminence.*

HARVEY G. QUANDT, Bayard-Greenbrier Methodist, Bayard, Iowa. "The Glorious Purpose of God's People." Isa. 49:6—*I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

WILLIAM I. NEWMAN, Bethany Congregational, Los Angeles. "Nocturnal Memories." Psalm 119:55—*I remember thy name in the night, O Lord.*

CLAIR E. CARPENTER, Adirondack Community, Lake Placid, N. Y. "Exploits vs. Excuses." Luke 3:8—*Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father."*

Glory of the Risen Christ

By Conrad Bergendoff

MORE than we are willing to admit, we share the reluctance of the contemporaries of Jesus to believe that he had all the qualifications of the Messiah. There is so much of the human about him. Does he not come from Nazareth, one of our ordinary towns? Do we not know his relatives, who are hardly different from ourselves? He never went to the name colleges of Jersusalem —where did he get his degree? Such questions passed through the minds of the people who counted in his day, and they dismissed him as a curiosity or a nuisance.

Our own generation isn't far different. Even those who accept him are happy that they can think of him in more exalted terms after the resurrection. Before that "he was despised, and rejected of men," one whom the cultured "esteemed not." But the Risen Christ is different. Now finally we can clothe him in terms of glory. We can portray him in Byzantine mosaic, clad in purple and richly colored vestments. A gold halo fits his head. He takes back a power he had relinquished when he humbled himself to be born of a virgin. In his earthly ministry he had paid so little attention to the paraphernalia of power that even his disciples reproached him. Could he not, after all, bring fire down from heaven? In the following ages of the church men breathed more freely, for then they could talk of triumph and victory, and could deck themselves out with names and symbols of authority in his name.

There remains, however, the disconcerting fact that the sole source of our information of the Risen Christ—the Bible—gives little support to the kind of glory men feel he should have.

Consider how he reveals himself after the resurrection! He joins two of his followers on their way to a suburb of Jerusalem and takes part in their conversation. He walks along with them so naturally that they show no curiosity about him until he asks them about happenings they thought everybody knew. When finally they realize who he is, because of the manner in which he blesses the bread, immediately they behold his presence. The glory that shone forth at the supper table at Emmaus was the same glory that had lit up the Upper Room in the night in which he was betrayed—before the resurrection.

Post-Resurrection Glory

The two returned quickly, Luke tells us, to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and others gathered together, rehearsing what had happened to Peter that same day. And again Christ appeared. In the glory of an Eastern potentate, an exalted ruler commanding legions of angels? Not at all. "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." The same person they had walked with in the fields of Galilee, and beheld in Capernaum, Bethany, Jerusalem. "And he took a piece of a broiled fish and ate before them"—as he had eaten with them on the lake of Galilee. They hardly believed, for joy. But it was a joy of recognition of one they had learned to know in the days of his humiliation.

We know something of the kind of body they beheld from the story of his appearance when the doubting Thomas was along. For to this disciple, who wanted to be certain that the Risen Christ was the same person who had suffered the shame of the cross, Jesus directed the command, "Put your finger here and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side." The print of the nails which Thomas had seen driven into Christ's hands and feet was still there. And Thomas believed. The glory of the Risen Christ was the glory of the cross!

One other example. Paul was journeying to Damascus. He and those with him heard a voice. They saw no one. But the voice left the companions of Paul speechless. Paul himself could only ask, "Who are you, Lord?" No vision here of a golden crown, or of remote sovereignty. Only a voice, a questioning, pleading voice asking, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" A voice reminiscent of him who on the cross had pleaded, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

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The Risen Christ speaks the same language of love and compassion, of forgiveness and direction, which they had heard who had listened to him on the roads of Judea and Samaria. No outward symbols of power to compel submission by flashing signals of authority which all the world likes to associate with the idea of glory. Only the glory of love, a love that seeks to open the eyes and ears of man to a new kind of life.

Service from the Heart

"A cloud took him out of their sight." He no longer walked with them or spoke to them as man to man. It was expedient for them that he go from them. Now they had time to think what had happened; they were no longer under his direct gaze. He was testing them, whether they would do his will, "not in the way of eye-service, but . . . from the heart." Not that he was far from them. Each time they broke bread as he had commanded they knew that he was present—present in a way that the print of the nails was on his body. Wherever two or three of them were gathered to speak of him and to pray to him, he was in their midst. But for the time being they must walk in faith, trusting that he was leading them. Not as blind following a blind guide, but as men and women with eyes which he had opened, they went forward on a way he had gone before. They were a party of pilgrims moving on toward a land he had showed them. He had given them their directions. They knew the way because he had spoken to them and even now spoke to them through that Word. Eventually they would again see him face to face.

But the way was itself radiant through a presence of his which led them on, as in former times a people of God had gone through a wilderness guided by a strange light both day and night. "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father," wrote one of the twelve as he recalled the days of Jesus' ministry, when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." The glory of the Risen Christ was to this disciple the same glory he had gazed upon when he had been with the Master on the mount of transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane.

The Lamb That Was Slain

Scripture thus gives us no material for imagining a Risen Christ in the terms of the authority and power the world cherishes. But you say, Is he not on a throne? At least, is not the ascended Christ a glorious and powerful ruler? He sits on the right hand of the Father, we confess in the creed of the ages. But look again at the scene unrolled for us in the pages of the Book of Revelation. Amid all the splendor of the heavenly court, "between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." The Christ revealed in the light of the eternal throne is pictured as a Lamb that gives its life! And the song which ascends to his honor describes the nature of his dignity:

> "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seal,
> for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God
> from every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
> and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God
> and they shall reign on earth."

Where do we find the basis for our beloved pictures of a Christ, even of a Risen Christ, who will bring lightning from heaven and destroy his adversaries by physical force? Why do we find it so difficult to see the glory of the Incarnate Christ as he ministers to mankind, even to the point of death on the cross, and only wait for him to reveal his *real* power and dominion in the way the Gentiles can understand? Like the Emmaus pilgrims we have followed with eager interest what happened to him, but "we had hoped he would redeem Israel." This was not the way to save Israel! We fail to understand why this should be his way, and hopefully wait for him to show mankind what he really can do when he displays his power. "O foolish men, . . . Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" This was the glory of Christ, that he suffers for the sin of man, that as a Lamb he carries and takes away the sin of the world!

God's Love

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. The glory of Christ is the grace of God. There is no greater glory than this, the glory of divine compassion, of divine sacrifice, of divine forgiveness. There is no greater power than the power to forbear and to forgive. In the kingdom of God the love of God is the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

An ambitious mother once asked a favor of Jesus for her two sons. She wanted one to sit on his right hand, one on his left, in his kingdom. "You do not know what you are asking," was the Master's reply. "You know," he told the disciples, "that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In all ages his disciples have sought this kind of favor from him. It is their idea of heavenly glory which they would appropriate to themselves. They have failed to see the glory of his ministry. If they have followed him in his ministry, their thoughts have gone easily from the lesser glory of service to the greater glory of the rewards that shall be theirs. They have carried on long and bitter controversies as to his nature and tried to define it in terms of substance, human or divine. They have hardly seen that the substance of his nature is the love that causes a man to lay down his life for his brother, the love that prompted God to give his

only begotten Son to die for the children he would save.

The glory of the Risen Christ is the truth that death has no power over such a love. And death is the last foe. All other powers have tried in vain to quench this power of God. They have failed. And scoffers have taunted, "But death will end it all." They were wrong. Death could not hold him whose nature was to reveal the love of God.

When Judas had betrayed him and made certain his death, it was night. The glory of Christ shines like a light in the night of human sin and unbelief. His glory was revealed in the life that he brought to those who found in him the nature of God. "I glorified thee," he could say as he went to his death, "on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do." He had brought life eternal to such as perceived the Father in him. "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Beyond all human ability to understand, the Christ Incarnate and Risen continues to uphold his people unendingly. His eternal glory is ever a glory of intercession. The Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us that "he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever." Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. The Christ who prayed on the cross is the Christ who intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father. The glory of Christ is not the glory of the Imperial Sovereign but the glory of the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. That is a glory whose power creates the kingdom of God.

The Source of Spiritual Power

The Sign of Life!

By Richard R. Caemmerer

I John 3:14-16.

HE'S still alive!" shout rescuers when they detect a feeble pulse beat in the victim of a disaster. "There's a sign of life in him!" Just so men of the world or men of the Christian company should be able to say of a man in Christ, "He's alive! We see a sign of life in him!" Driving along the city street we come upon a barricade by an open manhole and the sign, "Men at Work." Have you ever seen a man from whom you know that God is alive and at work in him, down in the crannies of his true self? What are the signs of life, and how do they get there? St. John wrote his whole First Epistle on the subject of God at work. The sign of his life in you, he said, is that you love the brother.

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren," St. John begins. The death of which he speaks is not the stopping of the pulse beat, or severing of the heart from the arteries, or decay of the flesh. It is the stopping of God in the heart, it is the cutting off of man from the Eternal. Death has its signs, too. "Any one who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." Murder means taking life. That's the capital crime. But the man who hates is one who cuts himself off from his brother. The sign of life is that a person is concerned for the life of the next man. The sign of death is that he doesn't care.

At this point, if this sermon and this word of Scripture is to do us any good, we shall have to practice an art which for most Americans becomes a bit awkward through disuse. In order to understand this business of Death with a capital D and Life with a capital L, we have to peer deep into our own hearts. When people talk about love they are apt to think of it in the wholesale and approve of it in the abstract. When people think about hatred they are apt to be quite ready to admit that the world is suffering from hatreds between nation and nation, class and class, race and race. But St. John brings us bolt upright against ourselves. For the death from God that is the murder of hatred begins deep down in the heart of the man who shuts himself off from another in need. Perhaps we lack practice in thinking about ourselves, but we certainly have practice in operating down in our inner selves, "shutting up the mechanisms of sympathy" from people, St. John would say. That's death!

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In another way St. John brings the matter close home and narrows the target of our thinking until it is right here. He talks about hating the *brother.* In the language of St. John that means the fellow Christian. It means those who live with you in your families and profess Christ with you in your friendships and in this congregation. This accent may, at first sight, seem a bit clannish. Christians go to great pains to remind themselves that they are to "do good to all men." But this morning we single out the "household of faith." The death of hatred flourishes in the soil of self-deception, where people tell each other that they are in favor of love but do nothing about it. Especially putrescent is that malady right among Christians, whose common membership in a congregation or in the Church Universal enables them to sing about the Tie that Binds and then go forth with no concern for the faith and the peace of others. Wherever a man knows Christ as his Lord and Savior, he is your brother; wherever you can reach him, he is your concern. Not to have that concern is death.

For the sign of life is love. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren."

Love starts in the recesses of the heart as it stirs and quickens and quakes to the need of the next man. Hence love has to have its eyes open, possessed of the second sight to look under the skin. We have a guide in this scrutiny, for we know the struggle within ourselves of flesh against Spirit and death against life, we know the passions that exalt self, and we know the surge of dark fear and petty irresponsibility. The brother is suffering from all of that, too! Cringe with raw sensitiveness to his pain and peril!

Household of Faith

And then do something about it. "My little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth." Our Lord told the story of the Good Samaritan to set forth the patience and resourcefulness—the conquest of fatigue and prejudice and poverty—of a love that rescued a man from death, shared food, guaranteed payment for his keep, helped all the way. Christians have been preached at so much against letting the left hand know what the right is doing that they begin to assume love to be a furtive, secretive business. Why of course it has to show! The life of love is one of high strategy and cunning plans. It starts with the dirty and wearing chores of parenthood. It stays on the job with the most crabbed of bosses. It confronts the failures of friends and forgives "seventy times seven" so that it can keep on bringing help and standing by in every need. "If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

Love as the sign of life is simply described: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Not only soldiers for their country, or mothers for their children, but everyone—everyone who is alive toward God—puts the brother first. It doesn't mean only to stop living for the sake of someone, but it means putting him first. "Love does not insist on its own way." You've known people who have loved you ahead of themselves, and you wouldn't be here if somebody had not loved you so. Above all Christ himself did it for you. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." Where can we get that life? How can we love with such love?

This is one of the great texts of the Bible in answer to that question. "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." There is the answer. Our love for people is God's gift to us.

At first glimpse St. John seems to say: If you want to know what true love is like, look at Christ dying for us. There is a good example, and it will give you the power to do the same thing. The trouble with that is that examples don't always give power. Love is not just a sign of *knowing* something. Love is a sign of *life.*

Source of Love

Actually the apostle says something tremendously more compelling. He talks to people who have already come to life and who already have found the power to love people. How could they be that way? What gave them that experience? What carried them from death to life, from hate to love? This, says the apostle, that God laid down the life of his Son for us.

These words help us to peer deep into the heart of God. God made men to love one another, but instead they hated and killed. How could he ever turn to them again, how could he ever restore his life to men who defiled his image and defaced his plan? This is what he did: He laid down the life of Jesus Christ his Son for men. Thus he did not hold their sin against them, and thus God himself could come back to hearts that had been dead and cruel. That plan and love of God comes to the surface of history in the life and death and rising again of Jesus Christ. And where God is working in the heart, there comes the thrust and drive again to love people. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"—we have the holy will to be *for* our brother instead of *against* him. There God's own Spirit and Presence comes flooding in upon us. "By this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us."

Brother and sister, can our Heavenly Father work in you that stirring of sympathy, that open hand, that forgiving heart and that will to sacrifice, poor as it may be and partial, by which you love your brother? Certainly he can, for that is what he is doing as he speaks to you of his own great love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ, as you are joined closely with that brother in the body of Christ in the sacrament of his body and blood, and as you speak together the simple truths of his love day by day. This is the world's last hour and we need each other's love so gravely. God help us for Jesus' sake to live for one another and raise the signal of his life in us!

God, Man and Nature

By Joseph Sittler, Jr.

Psalm 104.
Matthew 26:26-27.

IT is necessary for the preservation of man's body, the sanity of his mind, and the salvation of his soul that he be related to nature in a right way. The quest for this proper relationship is an ancient one, and two contemporary discussions have brought it to the attention of our day. The title of one of these books, *Our Plundered Planet,* may suggest an exaggerated sense of crisis, and the discussion may in detail be open to criticism. But the principal problem is not. That problem is this: When man relates himself to nature as one who plunders her, he ultimately destroys what he uses. When nature is regarded only as an inexhaustible warehouse of oil, ore, timber and all other materials, then she is ruthlessly plundered. This problem cannot be solved by economics, for the disposition to plunder is not an economic problem at all. It is the creation of a lust grown rapacious; and lust and rapacity are problems of the spirit of man before they ever become events of economic history.

World of Nature

Many of you must be reading with delight and instruction the other book that bears, although indirectly, upon our problem—Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us.* What sets this book apart from and above similar descriptions is a quality of wonder in the manner of it. The lady writes of plankton and the turning of the tides with a positive, spiritual grace. She stands beside her massive and venerable subject as a receiving child, reverent before its enduring mystery. To stand in wonder before what I did not make and whose processes and rythms I can neither alter nor arrest may be a means of grace, a path to understanding.

JOSEPH SITTLER, JR. has been professor of systematic theology at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, Maywood, Ill., since 1943. A graduate of Wittenberg College and Hamma Divinity School, he served as pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, from 1930 to 1943. Widely recognized as one of America's most promising younger theologians, he is a member of the study department committee of the World Council of Churches and was a delegate to the World Council Assembly on Faith and Order at Lund in 1952. His sermon was delivered last spring at the Rockefeller Chapel of the University of Chicago.

There is a meaning in the non-human world of nature: reason asserts it and all grave art bears it witness. When the artist Cezanne paints a barrel of apples, he shows it bathed with a light which is more like a luminous nimbus than even the softest light of autumn sun. And when Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman,* digs and manures and cares for a pathetic patch of sooty earth beside the door of his house in the Bronx, he is seeking for some green and fertile token of meaning in stubborn nature—something that will speak back to the brittle and sterile perdition of his soul. When theology does not acknowledge and soberly come to terms with the covert significance of the natural, the world of nature is not thereby silenced. "Nature is never spent," cries Gerard Manley Hopkins in a famous poem, "There lives the dearest freshness, deep-down things."

> The world is charged with the splendor of God
> It will flame out like shining from shook foil!

When a Christian theology, exclusively concerned with God and God's creature, man, turns from God's other creation, the world of nature, these ignored and hence violated vitalities cry out in anguish. "The whole creation," says St. Paul, "has been growing in travail." Nature will assert her significance; and the mind of our time has made it clear that, if Christian understanding will not articulate a theology for nature, unsilenceable nature will create her own.

Man Abdicates

There are, in the large, two ways by which man has sought to do justice to the realm of meaning in the natural world; two forms of relationship by which he has sought to come to terms with what he cannot silence.

First, nature can be subsumed under man. Materially, that is, she is reduced to a resource for his needs; spiritually she is envisioned as only an unreplying theater for his proud and pathetic life. Nature, that is to say, is divested of her own and proper life and is invested with the goods, the values and the ends of man. Her life, infinite in richness and variety, is made a symbolic companion of man's life; and all the moods and shadows, the pride and the pathos, the ambiguity and the sudden delight of man's life is read in her mobile face.

Another effort exists alongside this one and is

its exact opposite: Man is subsumed under nature. This relationship gains in persuasiveness when man's spiritual powers, confused by their own perplexities, are conjoined with a fresh mastery of natural forces to serve his clamant lusts. In such a case man abdicates—and celebrates his shameful abdication by perverse delight in that which overcomes him.

Neither of these ways is adequate, and man knows it. For neither one does justice either to the amplitude and glory of man's spirit or to the felt meaningfulness of the world of nature. Christian theology, obedient to the Biblical account of nature, has asserted a third possible relationship: that man ought properly stand alongside nature as her cherishing brother, for she too is God's creation and bears God's image.

Plundering Instead of Tending

When, for instance, one reads the 104th Psalm, one becomes conscious that this Psalm speaks of the relationship between man and nature in a quite new way. The poetical naivete of the images must not blind us to the majestic assertions of the song. In this Psalm nothing in the world of man and nothing in the world of nature is either independent or capable of solitary significance. Every upward-arching phenomenon, every smallest thing, is derived from the fountain of life. Light is a garment the deity wears and the heavens a curtain for his dwelling. The heavy voice of the thunder is his rebuke; the springs are his largess to every beast of the field. The trees and the birds, the grass and the cattle, the plump vine and wine that gladdens the heart of man are all bound together in a bundle of grace.

Yet this mighty structure of process and vitality, this complex of given creatureliness in which "the sun knows its time for setting"—all hangs by a slender thread. Natural and mortal life are incandescent with meaning because of their mutual dependence upon the will of the ultimate and Holy One. The Psalm says,

> These all look to thee,
> to give them their food in due season.
> When thou givest to them, they gather it up;
> when thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good things.
> When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;
> when thou takest away their breath, they die
> and return to their dust.
> When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;
> and thou renewest the face of the ground.

Here is a holy naturalism, a matrix of grace in which all things derive significance from their origin, and all things find fulfillment in praise. Man and nature live out their distinct but related lives in a complex that recalls the divine intentions as that intention is symbolically related on the first page of the Bible. Man is placed, you will recall, in the garden of earth. This garden he is to tend as God's other creation—not to use as a godless warehouse or rape as a tyrant.

Today, man is no longer related to nature in God's intended way. Nor can he from within himself find his way back to the blasted garden of joy. That, fundamentally, is why he plunders what he ought to tend; why he finds in nature sardonic images of his own perversion, and at the same time cannot avert his eyes from his violated sister who is heard groaning "in pain and travail until now."

"By the Word of the Lord," so we read, "the heavens were made." But this Word, ignored, is not thenceforth silent; this Word repudiated is not therefore quiescent. Is it possible that the Creator-Word, by whom all things were made, should be driven from his field by us? The central assertion of the Bible is that he has not been so driven, but rather drives, loves and suffers his world toward restoration. It is of the heart of the Christian faith that this mighty, living, acting, restoring Word actually identified himself with his cloven and frustrated creation which groans in travail. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." To what end? That the whole cosmos in its brokenness—man broken from man, man in solitude and loneliness broken from Holy Communion with his soul's fountain and social communion with his brother—might be restored to wholeness, joy and lost love.

One finds nowhere in the Bible that strange assertion which one hears almost everywhere else—that God is concerned to save men's souls! How richly, rather, is restoration there presented in terms of men's material involvement in the world of nature. Real blindness is given sight, real hands of helplessness are restored, real death is overcome, real legs enable a paralytic to walk. God is the undeviating materialist. He likes material; he invented it. I know no soul save an embodied soul, I have no body save this one born of other bodies, and there is no such thing as a man outside the created context of other men; therefore it is written that "God so loved the world."

God Is a Materialist

God—man—nature! These three are meant for each other, and restlessness will stalk our hearts and ambiguity our world until their cleavage is redeemed. What a holy depth of meaning lies waiting for our understanding in that moment portrayed on the last evening of Christ's life: "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave to them, saying, 'This is my body.' . . . Likewise also the wine . . . 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood.' "

Here in one huge symbol are God and man and nature together. Bread and wine, the common earthy stuff of our life when we have it, and of death when we've lost it. Both in the hands of the Restoring God—man!

The problem of material is not a material problem, for man is in it, and he complicates every problem. The problem of enough to eat is not ultimately an economic problem. For as man confronts the marvelous richness of the earth he can use these riches or abuse them. Which of these he chooses is a matter not soluble by mere planning. For there will never be enough for both love and lust!

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

By Clifford Ansgar Nelson

Matt. 10:29-31.

IN his recent volume, *This I Believe,* Quentin Reynolds, well-known war correspondent and journalist, writes a chapter on the subject "If I Were a Dictator." "If I were a dictator," he says, "the first book I would burn would be the Bible . . . because the whole concept of democracy came out of that book."

Reynolds is right. The Bible with its persistent doctrine of the dignity and value of the individual is a very uncomfortable book for a dictator to have around. And it is significant to notice that the dictatorships which have arisen in this century have all tried to minimize and destroy the influence of the Bible. The ideas of the Scripture are contrary to the whole pattern of dictatorship. From it flows the teaching that a man has infinite worth and dignity, that there is a sacredness about the individual personality that must not be violated.

Certainly our generation ought to have learned in the bitter fires of the events of the last half century that only faith in God can guarantee faith in man and keep alive the democratic ideal in our modern world. Democracy and Christian faith are not equivalent, to be sure, but it is the faith of Christ in the sacredness of the individual soul that has made all good men sensitive to the rights of people.

Two Theories about Man

There are in the main two different conceptions of what man is. The one says that an individual human being is utterly insignificant over against the vast context in which he is placed; that he appears on this earth by chance; that there is no Supreme Being interested in him; that he is here for a little bit of time and then vanishes into complete and permanent oblivion.

Sometimes the vastness of our universe which has been discovered by modern science seems to impress this idea. Earth itself, we are told, is only a small dot in the enormous expanse of the great Milky Way. Then a man in a pin point of time is but an infinitesimal particle who stirs slightly for an instant and then quickly dissolves back into the elements out of which he was originally compounded.

Or others would say that our modern industrialism has helped to depersonalize the individual. A man has become but a cog in the great machinery of mass production and he has importance only in relation to the total output of the system.

Christians Have Another Idea

Or sometimes it is the impersonalism of the enormous cities that has helped to give credence to the littleness of man. Those cities where the individual is dwarfed, where men and women are pushed about in the subways, then pour forth en mass to do their routine work, crushed by the constant go-getter spirit of competition in the race for materialistic success. I sometimes question whether God ever intended that men should live compacted together in the terrifying loneliness of the big cities of our modern world.

And then there is the modern state which has produced the "mass man" who gains value only as he relates himself to the purposes of the state and whose individual values seem to be almost completely lost.

But there is another idea which we Christians cherish. It says that even though man is small and weak, short-lived and fragile, yet he has infinite worth. He is a product of the process which has brought him forth with delicate and complex powers to think, to love, to plan and to believe. He is surrounded by divine love and care, and he is the agent of the Eternal to make the purposes of God come true. He is not a slave to the world's work, he is not simply a chip on the flowing stream of life, not a cog in the machinery of industry. He is a child in the Father's family, marked with the divine image, a fellow worker with God. Beneath him are the Everlasting Arms to guide and encourage every spiritual impulse, and ahead is an eternal destiny that draws him toward the city of God. Such is our faith, and such a faith endeared our Christ to the common, ordinary masses of men, not only in Palestine, but in every generation, our own not excluded.

Our Lord used hyperbole, a kind of broad exaggeration to make this conviction clear as he

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CLIFFORD ANSGAR NELSON has been pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., since 1935. A graduate of Augustana Seminary, he studied at Leipsig University, Germany, and traveled throughout Europe in 1946 for the Lutheran World Federation. Recognized as an ecumenical leader, he has served at intervals as president of the St. Paul and Minnesota Councils of Churches.

spoke to the multitudes in his day. I have a suspicion that Jesus and his men had been watching some poor fellow haggling over a few dead sparrows that were sold in the market place for food. Probably some boy had gone out with his sling shot and brought back a sack full of them to sell, five for a penny. Was it a sordid sight? Not to our Lord. Instead it became a vivid picture that we cannot forget. "You are of more value than many sparrows."

Of all birds, the sparrow is the dullest and least interesting. Of more than sixty species, not a single one has any color in its plumage. Only one species of these creatures which seem to be found in every clime—the song sparrow—can thrill with a song. But, declared Jesus, not a single one of them falls to the ground without the concern and watchfulness of the heavenly Father. And out of that he affirms his faith that all human life is surrounded by the tender love and concern of God, that man is precious in God's sight, that the individual counts, that life is significant for every single individual.

Then he continues with another hyperbole: Even the hairs of your head are numbered. How incredible! How absurd it sounds! Somewhere I read that Max Factor of Hollywood once employed a girl to count the hairs on a woman's head. It was a tedious job, but the tally showed that on her head there were 135,168 hairs. On a man's beard there were 60,000 hairs; on a mustache, 7,000.

God's Plan for Every Life

So great is the love and providence of God that he who holds the seas in the hollow of his hand also cares for the least and the last of human beings.

Such was the eternal truth in all of our Lord's teaching. His interest in individuals is apparent in the whole personal story of his life and his ministry. What is the Gospel story but the story of Jesus touching new splendor to little lives everywhere? Whether it be Nicodemus, or Peter, or John; whether it be the woman at the well of Samaria or the centurion; whether it be the blind man or Zaccheus, the publican: always he was seeking out people to show how God was concerned for them. Reverence for personality is a part of his ministry from the beginning all the way to the cross where he treated the thief with respect and prayed for his persecutors.

The world must not forget that respect and reverence for people had its source in Christ and his ministry. Before him even the nobility of Rome and Athens knew no better than to expose their unwanted babies or their diseased minds to death. The other day I followed a little family carrying a wee box containing a stillborn child out to God's acre. As I commended that life to God with prayer, I could only think of the contrast between that small Christian deed and the mass graves which I have seen at the former sites of the German concentration camps where up to 5,000 bodies were buried as though they were cattle.

There are no standardized parts in God's world of marvel and miracle. Any one of us who has gone into the FBI office in Washington must be amazed at the fabulous fact that no two prints of the human hand nor two snowflakes are ever alike as they come forth from the Creator. The artistry and handicraft of the Maker is beyond comprehension. Even the dust on the wings of a common moth under the microscope becomes a cluster of waving plumes, and each strand shows its own distinctiveness.

Dictators Fear Christianity

That kind of individuality is marked most in man. When we express that in the language of religion, it means infinite worth and love for every soul come forth from the hand of God. No dictator, no modern state, can rob people marked by the Christian faith of a sense of their dignity and value as individuals who are meant to fulfill some portion of the great symphony of life in their participation in the life of God's family. No wonder that dictators are foes of the Christian faith.

Only a dynamic and virile faith can maintain and restore the strength of human dignity and worth in life today. William Penn said long ago: "The nation that is not governed by God will soon be governed by tyrants."

Only the faith of Jesus is adequate to the forces that want to "depersonalize" the soul of man and make life cheap and sordid for humankind. Worship and reverence before the greatness of God, humble prayer and the bowing of the knee in commitment to the one true Lord of heaven and earth, obedience to the will of the Eternal—only these are adequate for people of our modern day. Forget reverence for God and soon reverence for man is lost and vanished from the earth. Sidney Lanier put it so well when he wrote:

> As the marsh-hen builds on the watery sod,
> So I will make me a nest in the greatness of God.

He who watches the fall of the sparrow, he who guides the waterfowl, he who is like a good shepherd, he it is who is our refuge and strength.

Challenge of Brotherhood

It follows from our simple and yet profound faith in the interest and care of God for every individual that we too must learn from Christ to treat every personality with respect and honor. Draw out the implications of this faith which we have learned from Jesus Christ and it puts us in debt to all men everywhere. It is this faith which makes a Christian eager and ready to treat his brother, his mother, his child or his neighbor with tenderness and respect in every relationship. It is this faith which alone can bring decency and good will into the disturbed relations between labor and employer, between black man and white man, between people in every relationship of life. It is this faith which makes possible the concern of millions of people in our country for those who suffer in catastrophe, in poverty, in the ravages of cancer, or tuberculosis or multiple sclerosis. It inspires the missions and benevolences of the church and

is seen in the concern of our nation for the have-not peoples of the world.

Reverence for life is the name of the central philosophy of that strange figure of our time who has so richly dramatized the Christian witness, Albert Schweitzer. Of all the anecdotes of his fascinating life I like best that story which the reporters tell of his reception held in the station at Chicago where he was honored by the leading citizens. They prepared their speeches in English, in German and in French. They spoke formally of their regard for him. And then in the midst of it he spied a little old lady off in the distance struggling with her heavy bags. Excusing himself, he hurried over to her side, took her bags in his big, wonderful hands, and saw her to her seat in the train to wish her a good journey. When he came back to his reception he simply said: "Excuse me, but I was just having a bit of my daily fun." "It was the first time I ever saw a sermon walking," was the remark of one of the newsmen. "A lot of us stuffed shirts were unstuffed at that moment," said one of the prominent hosts. But Schweitzer, the man with a world-wide reputation, his mind busy with the writing of profound history of civilization, was not beyond noticing the need of a little woman and acting to relieve that need.

So our Lord impressed the world with the amazing love of God who stands guard over the chirping sparrow. How much more will he not watch over you and me? Are we not of much more value than many sparrows? Here lies the glory and the relevance of the Gospel for today's sophisticated and secularized man.

Is it too good to be true? That we must not say. Instead it is more Christian to say, "It is too good not to be true." God is too great to let us down and too good to let us alone. He walks beside each of us on our uncharted pathways and encompasses each of us with his timeless Presence. Let that faith rejoice our hearts and spur us on to new adventures in human concern.

My sermon theme comes from that old-fashioned song that was sung in my boyhood. Today it still rings with the truth of God:

I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free;
For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Pulpit Post

The Flag in Church

SIR: I would express my special appreciation of the article by O. Edgar Wright, "Use of the Christian Flag." Surely too long has there been acquiescence in the symbolism in church which indicates that religion is devoted to the enhancement of nationalism. Early Christians died rather than burn a pinch of incense in recognition of the primacy of the emperor. How can we justify our common way of saying that Caesar comes before Christ in our devotion? If we must have flags in the church, let their relation to each other make unmistakably clear our faith in him who is Lord of all.

Rolla District, St. Louis Conference, Methodist Church. — GALEN C. FAIN, Superintendent.

Permission Granted

SIR: I have read with much interest and satisfaction Dr. Homrighausen's article, "Moving toward a Teaching Church," in the May issue of The Pulpit. This is excellent. It is the kind of article that we should like to have for general distribution to our people.

May we have your permission to reprint the article in our *Church School Worker* which each month reaches some 13,000 teachers and pastors of our denomination? We shall of course give proper credit.

Board of Christian Education and Publication, Evangelical and Reformed Church. — F. I. SHEEDER, Executive Secretary.

Rural Preaching

SIR: The May number of The Pulpit, with its two worthy presentations of the rural church, is to be commended. I have also read your earlier discussions of rural preaching with interest.

I find myself in agreement with your policy of printing only sermons of merit. Much as one would like to read more of the sermons preached in the tens of thousands of rural churches of America, we recognize that you cannot print them unless you first receive them and then only if they are worthy.

I would like to venture five observations about preaching in town and country churches. (1) No one knows much about it. Even those who visit many churches have only a casual familiarity with preaching in rural pulpits. If one desires to teach a course on Preaching to Rural People one must rely mostly upon one's own experience and upon scattered manuscripts of sermons and observations. (2) Country ministers with many duties to perform and with smaller congregations do not make as much of their preaching as do ministers in the pulpit-centered city churches. (3) Despite this situation there is a great deal of helpful and constructive preaching going on in our rural pulpits. I have heard some that matches and even excels that heard in some larger centers. (4) A minister who lives greatly in the rural environment, sensing its problems and opportunities, breathing deeply of the life of the community will have truth to share that America needs. (5) Rural ministers are challenged to discipline themselves in preaching as in other matters. If they are in dead earnest about their witnessing, let them write sermons for publication. They should and can share their ministry with a larger constituency.

Bible College of Missouri, Columbia, Mo. — MARK RICH, Professor of Rural Church.

Catholic Sermons

SIR: I have been a subscriber to The Pulpit since 1936, and because I still read the publication you have testimony to its worthwhileness. Some issues, of course, are much more helpful than others. Two great interests, it seems to me, you are overlooking. One is the funeral sermon. I would appreciate the publishing of a few good, short funeral messages. Another area you are overlooking is sermons and materials on church building. We are living in one of the greatest church-building eras in our history, and The Pulpit is in a sense ignoring it. Also, I liked Newman's suggestion to have some sermons by Catholic priests.

Henderson Memorial Methodist, Detroit, Mich. — HOWARD W. BURDEN.

[(1) The Pulpit will welcome helpful funeral sermons from its readers. (2) An article on building campaigns is scheduled for the near future. (3) If you were the editors, which Roman Catholic priests would you invite to submit sermon manuscripts?—THE EDITORS.]

(Continued on page 22)

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Pulpit Post

(Continued from page 20)

The Great Fear

SIR: In the June Pulpit there appeared a sermon on "The Great Fear," alleged to have been delivered in the Wesley Methodist Church of Washington, D. C. I say "alleged," for it is a little difficult to see how a man could deliver such a sermon in an American church in the national capital and be preaching to anything except empty pews before the service was over.

How much longer will church members sit, idle and indifferent, while such teaching is proclaimed from the pulpit? It is time that they rose up in righteous indignation and saw that the church doors opened outward for such unworthy men, opened and then were forever closed against their return.

Los Angeles, Calif. ROY W. ABEL.
Attorney.

No Textless Sermons

SIR: Most of all in The Pulpit I like the Editor's Page, Sermon Summaries, Titles and Texts and Pulpit Paragraphs. Least of all, I like the occasional "textless" sermons.

By the way, the text of Sermon Summary number one for June is 11:4 instead of 2:4 in Ecclesiastes. If I were trying to catch the spirit of Brother Enslin, I should guess that you mistook the writer's *eleven* for a Roman *two*.

You are giving us a great service in The Pulpit.

Jackson Park Methodist, J. CHARLES REICHARD.
Kannapolis, N. C.

Trend Among Seminaries

SIR: The article by Dennis J. Bennett, "Neurotic Ministers," was the long-needed impetus to take an honest look over the past three years since my graduation from seminary. If a latent neurosis provides the minister with a point of rapport with his problem-parishioners, I certainly suffer from no serious lack!

Out of a research paper done in my senior year at Bethany Biblical Seminary, I gleaned the following conclusions: (1) The majority of our seminaries are realizing the pressing need to widen their curriculums in order to include more courses in practical pastoral training. (2) Seminaries are sensing a need for a closer student-teacher relationship that makes for objective counseling of those who present fundamental personality problems. (3) There is a marked desire to have the newly trained minister sufficiently versed in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith so that his people can be fed "spiritual bread" and not be merely entertained. (4) There is an increased consciousness that the minister must at regular intervals take objective stock of himself and his work, and, when the need arises, seek counsel so that deficiencies can be corrected. DONALD G. HOLSOPPLE.

Salamonie Church of the Brethren,
Lancaster, Ind.

A Month's Notice

SIR: I thoroughly enjoyed your issue of The Pulpit for April 1953, especially Clarence Seidenspinner's article on "Imagination and Worship." I firmly believe most of the clergy are in danger of the "dapper minister" as well as the "confused Anglican priest."

Being of the Scotch-Presbyterian tradition, I was somewhat amused at the author's statement: "I find it very difficult, also, to worship in the presence of a minister who wears a neck stock with tabs." I believe that he is referring to us Scots. I must correct his terminology by stating that *bands* is the correct word, not *tabs* when referring to the clerical dress of most Presbyterians here in the U.S.A. or in Canada.

The author would find it difficult to worship with Calvin, Knox, Witherspoon and thousands of ministers in the Presbyterian Church throughout the world. Needless to say, John Wesley, George Whitefield and Cotton Mather, who wore the bands representing the two tables of stone (Ten Commandments)—a symbol of preaching authority—would make the author a little nervous.

I trust that the author will give a month's notice to all Presbyterian churches in which he plans to worship in order that the bands may be removed.

J. ARTHUR MACC. HANNA.
Oak Hill & Horeb Presbyterian,
Oak Hill, Ohio.

Our Rosebud Ministers

DR. ENSLIN: I raise my word of protest against some of the implications of your article in the May Pulpit on "Our Rosebud Ministers."

For six years during my pastorate of the Clarendon Methodist Church of Arlington, Va., where the birth rate is reasonably high, beautiful rosebuds have been placed in a silver vase, given especially for the purpose, and the vase is set on the top of the baptismal font. Names of the babies in whose honor the rosebuds are displayed are always found in the church bulletin. During the afternoon, our nursery visitor takes the flower to the parents, and enrolls the child in the nursery department.

I can see nothing effeminate about the plan, nor do I see where it detracts from reality. The parents are delighted to know that the church recognizes the advent of children in such a manner.

I have never used flowers of any kind in baptismal services, but I commend to my brethren the announcement of a birth with a flower. Our people like it.

Clarendon Methodist, C. FRED WILLIAMS.
Arlington, Va.

SIR: Morton Enslin and his biting comments are good for us, but I'm wondering if others felt as I, that he was a little rough on those of us who place rosebuds on the altar for newborn babies. Is it altogether "sloppy sentiment?"

I find The Pulpit very helpful.

Westminster Presbyterian, WALTER F. WOLF.
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Library of Recorded Sermons

SIR: We are in the process of setting up the Reigner Library of Recorded Sermons and Worship Services, a description of which can be secured from the undersigned.

We believe this library will be a valuable aid to students in homiletics, and in the distant future it will undoubtedly be of considerable historic worth.

If there is any way you can pass on to the readers of The Pulpit our request for information concerning the whereabouts of recordings of sermons by widely known ministers now deceased, we shall count it a great favor if you will do so.

ROBERT WHITE KIRKPATRICK,
Union Theological Seminary, Professor of Homiletics.
Richmond, Va.

His Renewal Is Coming

SIR: My renewal subscription will be forthcoming. I do not know when I have enjoyed reading a sermon as much as the one by the 1953 Seminarian Preacher, A. Fay Hill. The text for the sermon was unique; the presentation I thought was interesting and vital. He accomplished what he set out to do—prove the hidden treasures that reside hidden in Christ and the Christian religion. My own faith was strengthened as I read and reread his sermon.

Emmanuel Baptist, WINSTON E. NEAL.
Merced, Calif.

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'What's in a Name?'

NOW that the election is over I hope that he can become 'Mr. Eisenhower,'" remarked one of my friends on the morning of November 5. I hoped so too, for the incessant yelping about "Ike" and "Harry," "Mamie" and "Bob," had become very hard to take. The answer is easy: "Oh, but that is an evidence of our democratic way of life." Perhaps it is, but for some of us it is a heavy price to pay. Despite the seemingly concerted efforts to do away with all that smacks of refinement and dignity, not to mention formality, as mid-Victorian and worse, there are still some—I had almost said "a remnant"—who find values in the old phrase, "It is (not) seemly so to do."

These musings, this rainy morning in late May, were prompted by a particularly distasteful so-called religious weekly which had arrived by the morning's mail. How I get on the free list of so many of these sheets is a never-ending source of perplexity. I looked it over; read the 2500-word editorial, replete with two texts and three cartoons, the burden of which was that over 22,000 subscribers were slow in sending in their cash and that this lamentable state of affairs forced the evangelist-editor to spend "$10,000 a year, God's money, just trying to help careless Christians remember to renew"; was mildly nauseated at some suggested sermon subjects and rather more so at their development.

But what is the connection between these two paragraphs? Much. The most conspicuous element—even more, if possible, than its general bad taste—was the profusion of nicknames, not alone in the news items and contributed copy but on the masthead. A casual glance revealed, in addition to four Bob's, a Jimmy, Bill, Billy, Sam, Merv, Pat, Ben, and Freddie. In addition were several of the so-cute parenthetical sort: "Dr. D. A. (Scotchie) ——" and "Dr. R. P. (Fighting Bob) ——."

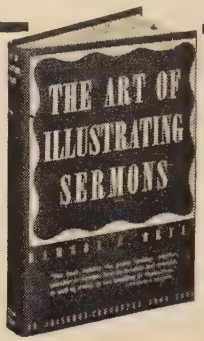
That seemed to me a pretty large crop for a 12-page sheet, but I am inclined to feel it is not a totally unreliable indication of a definite ecclesiastical trend, rather above the cultural level likely to be attracted to the journal in question. With no difficulty at all I told off on my fingers several clergymen of national fame who are apparently better known by carefully cultivated nicknames than by the soberer appellations they presumably received at birth.

"So what?" is the reply which many —probably even among the clientele of this estimable journal—may interject. "What is the harm of it? It is a wholesome sign that preachers are no different from other men." Frankly, I have little interest in trying to answer my hypothetical hecklers. As has been often remarked, "For people who like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they like." (It is quite unnecessary to write me that that quotation is verbally inaccurate. I am perfectly aware of the fact and have seen it in so many forms that I quite despair of finding the archetype without more research than I intend to devote to the matter.)

That nicknames and other informal terms of address have their place, and a perfectly proper place, I would not for an instant question. Indeed, it has long been my conviction that in English the absence of an equivalent for the more intimate *du* of German is a distinct loss. But the particular element which makes them attractive, at times exquisitely lovely, appears to me utterly lost when they become, so to speak, commercialized. This is essentially an honest world. Water has a tendency to find its own level and stay there. The man in public life, at least in what may be styled the soberer brackets, gives—or so it seems to me —a pretty reliable indication of his own self-evaluation by the form of salutation or address which he tolerates, not to mention cultivates. I find it very hard to believe that anyone would have dreamed of addressing Bismarck as "Snookums"; I am certain no one would ever have done it twice. Nor is it to me at all likely that Napoleon played with the notion of having himself styled "Napoleon (Shorty) Bonaparte."

Thus I shall continue to read the Scriptures, quite regardless of version, with a satisfaction that I am not forced to meet "Jake" and "Josh" in the pages of the Old Testament, "Pete" and "Andy"—not to mention "Battling Barny" or "Stalwart Steve" —in the pages of the New. Yes, I will confess it: at times I have had a half sympathy for the much maligned Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men.

SERMONS and . . .
SERMON BUILDING



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A Professor of Christian Education Evaluates the Latest Translation of the Bible

The RSV in Christian Education

By Ralph D. Heim

WHATEVER their associates in religious leadership may think about the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Christian educators welcome it. Bible scholars may or may not consider it a good translation; liturgists may accept or reject it. It may or may not contain a plenitude of textual tidbits for preachers; and theologians may or may not find their favorite prooftexts in it. Christian educators needed a Bible somewhat like this one and they will use it.

This is not to say that we have now a perfect Bible for educational purposes. It is only a better Bible than the King James Version.

It could have been a still better Bible if educational standards had been put in the forefront where they belonged. A member of the revision committee says that certain revisers had the special task of keeping the committee mindful that there is a *man* in the *pew*. It is lamentable that others were not designated to represent the interests of the *child* in the *home* and the *pupil* in the *school*.

The Bible in Home and School

The Bible is used, actually handled, most often in the home and the church school agencies. The principal users are children and young people, pupils and teachers, including parents. This fact—as well as the discovery of additional manuscripts, the increase of scholarly knowledge, and the growth of language—represents a change since 1611 when the Bible was used largely by the clergy in the churches. Consequently this Bible should have been designed primarily for use in study and instruction.

Strangely, that consideration seems to have been largely overlooked.

Although the revision enterprise was fostered from the beginning by the International Council of Religious Education, and then by its successor, the preface to the new version states that the task of the revisers was to "embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature."

Literary Effect

There, as elsewhere, it appears that the revisers were to be concerned about scholarship and, particularly, literary effect more than use. As for use, they were to be peculiarly alert to produce a work which pastors and adult members of the churches would accept for the chief services of public worship. Although private worship is mentioned, it was scarcely the point of major concern.

However, many churches use only a few selected Psalms and relatively small proportions of the Gospels and Epistles in their major services, whereas all the Bible is used sooner or later in Christian education, at least half of it rather regularly. Nowhere else do people meet more than mere fragments of the Old Testament which occupies two-thirds of the volume. Besides, half of the worshiping, to which primary attention was given by the revision committee, is done by children and young people. Hence the revisers would better have been charged with the task of preparing a Bible "for the use of the people, including the young, in education and worship."

An Improved Translation

Nevertheless, the committee seems to have done better than it was directed to do. Despite obstacles, it has produced what promises to be an improved instrument for educational purposes.

When Christian educators use the Bible in their work they have a major aim. This aim is mentioned only once in the preface of the RSV, but it is there—in the last sentence where the revisers express the hope and prayer that the work will help men "obey" God's Word.

Christian educators want people to comprehend the Bible; but more: to conduct themselves according to its precepts. The Bible is a medium of communication, and there can be no actual communication until there is response. Moreover, the educators have their eyes fixed primarily on that response element.

Polite Forms

The archaic language of the older Bible has always confused children and young people; their elders sometimes, one suspects, only pretended to understand. This has been an obstacle to approximating the ultimate educational objective as closely as possible.

Will people understand the new Bible better and, by that advantage as well as others, live the Biblical truth more completely? There are reasons to be hopeful: (1) The punctuation is improved. It does, as punctuation is meant to do, make the sense more clear. (2) The text is in paragraphs that represent thought-units, instead of verses that often break the train of thought and sometimes violate it. (3) The poetry is printed as poetry, although it would have been better printed in a more normal format. Even so, our pupils may now be less prone to accept poetic expression as literal fact. (4) Perhaps we shall be saying soon that we have more beautiful expression in the RSV. It is a different type of beauty—not so pompous and sonorous as that in the King James, rather chaste and direct, but nonetheless gripping. (5) Best of all, the veil of obscure language has been partially torn away. That last advantage is limited because the Elizabethan language forms have been retained where God is addressed. The limitation is regrettable.

The RSV is said to be true to the plumb line of the original text. Did the Old Testament authors, the evangelists and Paul use a special "polite" form of language respecting God? If they did not, this Bible is untrue to the original at the point where it uses *thee* and associated words. The revisers were charged to be true to the King James tradition. Were not *thee* and such words the accepted terms of all discourse in 1611? Then, why are not *you*, *your*, and *yours* similarly recognized as the proper words of all discourse in a version of 1952?

While the revisers were compromising the King James tradition by using

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RALPH D. HEIM has been professor of Christian Education at Gettysburg Theological Seminary since 1939. The author of A Harmony of the Gospels for Students *and* Leading a Sunday Church School *(both published by Muhlenburg Press), he has carried responsibilities in the field of religious education for the United Lutheran Church and interdenominationally on local, state, national and world levels. He has contributed to curricular publications since 1930 and is a new editorial writer for the* 20th Century Quarterly, *a religious educational journal published by The Christian Century Foundation.*

Sermon Summaries

Loyalty Check

THE current wave of loyalty checks in our government set me to wondering how our church people would stand up under a *Christian* loyalty check. Could we "clear" if our loyalty to the kingdom of God were put to the test?

When you joined the church you took a Christian's loyalty oath. Remember? If you joined one of the evangelical churches, your oath, in substance, was this: Believing Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the Savior of my soul and the Master of my life, I will be loyal to him and to his Church. I will support the church with my presence, my prayers, my gifts and my service. Are you loyal to that pledge?

Spectacle of Disloyalty

There is one New Testament character especially who shows us both disloyalty and loyalty. His name was Simon, but our Lord called h'm Peter. He gave little promise of living up to that name until he was given a loyalty check and failed. He had vowed to go with Jesus to death if need be. But the Savior replied: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." The next dawn saw Peter weeping penitently because his Lord's prediction had proved true—Peter was a spectacle of disloyalty.

But that is not the end of the story. Peter's tears of penitence were genuine, and they betokened a change. The coming years revealed a hero of faithfulness. Whatever tests came he proved to be "true blue." Tradition tells us that when he went to his death on a cross he asked to be crucified head downward, deeming himself unworthy of dying like his Lord.

The Christian church needs greater loyalty today. The empty pew is the scandal of Protestantism, as the unused ballot is the scandal of our democracy. Both spell the same thing—a careless indifference that adds up to disloyalty. In both you have the key to disaster and ruin.

Some of you would be shocked to think of yourselves as traitors in any sense. But test yourself by your Christian loyalty oath—the vow you took when you united with the church: Is Jesus Christ really the Master of your life? Are you loyal to his church, supporting it as you promised with your presence, your prayers, your gifts and your service?

A publisher's plan for a church loyalty crusade shows the extent of disloyalty within the Lord's army. The plan called for use of cards pledging members to attend church each and every Sunday for a month and tokens

(Continued on page 28)

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a special form of address to God, they were recognizing it in an unfortunate way. Too many pages have unnecessarily big King Jamesian words. For example, on page 577 there are items like these: "exult,'" "wantonly treacherous," "integrity," "vindicate," "consort with dissemblers," "habitation." Certainly one or two of those could have been put into present-day koine.

Once again the youthful and simple, to whom especially Jesus appealed in his teaching, have been partially overlooked by a type of ecclesiastical leadership that is too highly aware of scholarly achievements and certain literary values to the neglect of other worthy standards, too exclusively conscious of the adult membership in the church family, and too largely preoccupied with the preaching work of the ministry.

Yet the Revised Standard Version of the Bible will, almost surely, yield more readily to study and be more compelling for living. It promises to prove itself even more fully the supreme resource for helping pupils along The Way with increasingly meaningful faith in vigorous action.

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *Christian's Right to Nonconformity*

IT is an interesting fact that John Quincy Adams was never quite sure that the voice of the people was the voice of God. "If the majority is 51 and the minority is 49," he asked, "is it certainly the voice of God? If tomorrow should change to 50 vs. 50, where is the voice of God? If two and the minority should become the majority, is the voice of God changed?" As citizens of this nation we are rightly committed to the proposition that the majority rules our government, but as Christians we have an even higher fealty. Our allegiance is to God. By prayer and by meditation, by thinking and by reading, by listening and by living, we seek to know God's will for us. Finding it, we do it; and conforming thus with that which God has asked of us, we have the right to nonconformity in anything which man demands in contradiction. We have no need for fear. We can decline to be pressured. We can refuse to be pushed around.—*Roy M. Pearson, Hancock Congregational, Lexington, Mass.*

• *The Times Are Reversed*

IT would have been inconceivable in my generation that a book such as *God and Man at Yale* should be written by a young college graduate and be greeted with wide and favorable reception. And it is alarming. When youth becomes as conservative as its elders there is something radically wrong with youth. Twenty-five years ago an aphorism was widely quoted to the effect that "if a young man is not a socialist by the time he is 17, he is no good; if he is still a socialist at 25 he is a fool."—*Ralph T. Haas, Crescent Avenue Presbyterian, Plainfield, N. J.*

• *The Growth of Faith*

INSTEAD of growing up spiritually, many of us are growing away spiritually. We are ignorant of the most elemental ideas of the Bible and the Kingdom of God. We have stopped growing inside. We still retain our childhood ideas of God. We have so little real faith in God to meet life. We have so many superstitions and hangovers that we do not even have a decent idolatry. It reminds me of the time I asked a member of the church, "What is the religious preference of your neighbors?" "Oh, they're Lutherans, but they don't work at it," he replied. We have permitted ourselves to be spiritual pygmies and dwarfs. We have, through indifference and sheer laziness, become lopsided in our growth. We have become spiritually blind, or at best have only one "lazy eye." A little boy asked a fisherman at a wharf, "Would I drown if I fell in there?" "No," said the fisherman. The surprised boy asked again, "Are you sure I wouldn't drown if I fell in there?" "No," came the answer. "It isn't falling in that drowns you—it's staying there." If our faith is to increase and be meaningful, it must grow. There are no shortcuts to faith. "First the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear."—*John G. Simmons, St. Matthew's Lutheran, North Hollywood, Calif.*

Pulpit Calendar

Aug. 2—10th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 9—11th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 16—12th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 23—13th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 30—14th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 6—Labor Sunday.
Sept. 7—Labor Day.
Sept. 13—16th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 20—17th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 27—18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 27-Oct. 4—Religious Education Week.
Oct. 4—19th Sunday after Pentecost. World Wide Communion Sunday.
Oct. 11—20th Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 18—21st Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 25—22nd Sunday after Pentecost. World Order Sunday.
Oct. 31—Reformation Day.
Nov. 1—Reformation Sunday. All Saints' Day.
Nov. 8—24th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 15—25th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 22—Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 26—Thanksgiving Day (U.S.A.).
Nov. 29—First Sunday in Advent. Stewardship Sunday.

SEASONS: Whitsuntide, Kingdomtide.

ALTAR COLORS: Sundays after Pentecost, Green; Reformation, Red; Thanksgiving, Red; Advent, Violet.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

• *Organizing from Within*

THE sociologist-writer, Sorokin of Harvard, points out that, at the root of our difficulty, lies the fact that our contemporary culture is essentially sensate and egoistic. Ethics has become increasingly utilitarian and hedonistic. The transfiguration of our culture, he adds, must begin with the conversion of individuals who forsake the way of sensate self-seeking and dedicate themselves to absolute spiritual values. When Martin Niemöller was in this country, he referred to the same broad truth in two striking sentences: "God is a better organizer than any of us. He organizes from within." This is the Christian view and the Christian approach to a new life and a new world.—*William Jannsen, First Presbyterian, Normal, Ill.*

• *Affairs Are Now Soul Size*

IN his play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, Christopher Fry dramatizes the nightmares of war prisoners quartered in a church. Out of dream-filled mutterings, it becomes clear that the blood guilt of these imprisoned men is but symbolical of the guilt which involves us all. The earth is a prison not to be escaped and we are sleeping through the fitful dreams of the breaking dawn of what must be a new and better day for men.—*John S. Whiteneck, Jr., Bakersfield, Calif.*

• *Greatest Thing In the World*

WALLACE PETTY made it possible for one who had hurt him grievously to have a greatly desired position. A brother minister then commented: "I see this afternoon you heaped coals of fire upon the head of the person who wronged you."

"No," replied Petty, "by that act of graciousness I was simply putting out some smoldering embers of desire in my own life." When hate meets hate it gathers force, but when hate meets love, love conquers.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

• *In His Name*

ONE Sunday morning I sat with the preacher at the opening service in his new church. The auditorium was filled, and everyone was happy. The pastor was reading communications, including the following telegram: "Congratulations! Please announce to the congregation that I am sending a contribution of $25 to the building fund."

Finally the pastor came to a small card that carried the simple statement, "In His Name." The card, unsigned, had been placed on a new $3,000 organ that had been installed the afternoon before. It was later established that the organ was a gift, but even yet the name of the donor is a secret.

People usually don't want publicity when they do really big things.—*Bruce F. Gannaway, District Supt., Sarasota District, Methodist Church, Sarasota, Fla.*

Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Recent Books on Church Music

THE late Harry Rimmer wrote a provocative little book, *The Antiquity of Music* (Rodeheaver Hall-Mack, Winona Lake, Ind., 64 pages, $1), in which he claims that "the oldest of all arts is the gift of making melody." Dr. Rimmer speaks of "Lucifer before his fall as the first created being to make music," and he says "the morning stars (actually and literally) sang together" (Job 38:7). Denying that the phrase may be mere poetry, he affirms "that a corpsucular wave of material comes across a given space and the mathematics of its progress decide whether it shall be received as a color or as a sound . . . Reduce the speed and lengthen the wave . . . of infra-red waves to a sufficient degree and they strike the ear as sound." (What would he do with Psalm 114:4 and 6, where the mountains and hills skip like rams and lambs?) Surely Our Lord was not referring to musicians when he said, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44)! Whether you accept Rimmer's conclusions as scientific or pseudoscientific, they will set you thinking.

In *Youth Choirs* (Harold Flammer, New York, 96 pages, no price listed), Paul J. Miller goes into exhausting detail about every phase of the multiple choir system, from the time of rehearsal to the dress and mannerisms of the director. Leaving little to the imagination, he discusses the subject from these standpoints: organization, rehearsals and problems. Much of what he says is good. However, his major premise seems to be that every child is perfect. With a minor premise that every choral director ought to be perfect, the inevitable conclusion follows: Therefore, every rehearsal will be perfect. Selah!

If every church were a perfect setup, and every minister of music a paragon of virtue, his suggestions would be ideal. But it is never easy to tell a monotone that he cannot join the choir; nor is it practical for the director "to try a new clothes ensemble weekly" (Page 62). Despite exhortations to the contrary, there will always be disciplinary problems when normal children get together, and every director will have his distraught moments! However, if you want to know what you ought to be doing, here's the book for you.

Silent Night, The Story of a Song, by Hertha Pauli (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1951 edition; 81 pages, $2.50), is slanted for children and young people, but the story of the world's best loved Christmas carol is a perennial favorite, and can be read profitably by adults as well.

Allan Bacon, professor of organ, College of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif., has privately published *The True Function of Church Music* (109 pages, $1). This little volume, from the pen of one who combines excellent musicianship with rare common sense, is refreshing reading. "Good church music," this author says, "must be functional; it must serve the purpose for which it is intended . . . as an adjunct to church worship. If it fails in that respect, it is not good church music." Recognizing that little "Susie Jones is a better girl after singing 'Yes, Jesus loves me,'" Bacon adds, "In all humility, I hope that my contact with Bach leaves me a better man spiritually. That is all that really counts." Revealing a thorough knowledge of his subject, the author insists that "church music should help bring worshipers into the presence of God," yet he frankly admits that "we get

(Continued on page 28)

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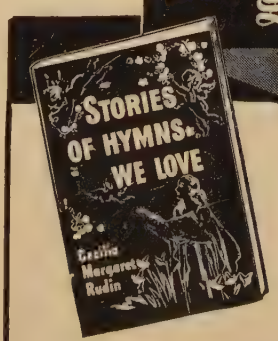

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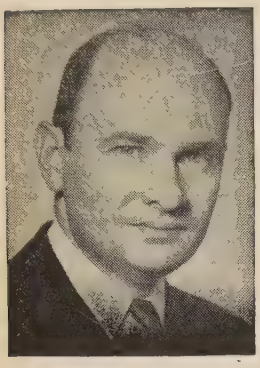

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

The Church Year in Worship

FIFTEEN years ago Burton Scott Easton and Howard Chandler Robbins published their book, *The Eternal Word in the Modern World.* This book arose out of their teaching and experimentation in homiletical classes. It was a study of the use of the church year in preaching. The meaning of each liturgical season was discussed briefly, and then the traditional lessons from the lectionary were set forth. Preaching suggestions were made for morning and evening worship with the Epistles and Gospel of the day. Without being academic and pedantic, it was a scholarly, practical, helpful book for the minister who sought to give form and continuity to his preaching.

During the summer and early autumn months the far-sighted minister is interested, not only in his preaching program for the year, but in the whole calendar of worship. Some ministers will want to begin their planning with the first Sunday in Advent, which opens the traditional church calendar, and will then want to follow that calendar through the year. This is particularly true of Episcopalian and Lutheran churches and other Protestant groups which adhere rigidly to the traditional liturgical cycle.

Other ministers in the free Protestant tradition, however, will recognize the fact that for a good many Protestant churches the liturgical year actually begins with the first regular service of the autumn season. When people return from their vacations they are ready to begin a new line of thought and a new year of worship. Wise planning of the church year in regard to its worship and preaching, therefore, will take into consideration the psychology of the opening movement of the autumn season. How can the minister prepare for the new season?

The writer of this column has developed possibilities along this line in his book, *Great Protestant Festivals,* published last year by Henry Schuman of New York. (See review, page 29). The volume recognizes the fact that in most Protestant churches the worship program is actually planned on a seasonal basis. Following the initial discussion of such topics as "Festival Worship in Protestant Churches," "Worship and the Common Life," the book is divided into a discussion of worship during the autumn, winter, spring and summer cycles.

Along with traditional emphases, such as All Saints Day, Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent and others, there is also recognition of distinctive Protestant festivals. Very early in the season, for example, there are such days as Rally Day, World Communion Sunday, Reformation Sunday, World Peace Sunday and others. These observances are studied and examples given from parish celebrations. Examples are also given regarding the celebration of the older traditional days. What happens, for example, during Christmastide in such a parish as the First Methodist Church of Evanston, where there is a well defined cycle of Christmas observance, or such a parish as that of Old South Church in Boston? What happens during Lent in such an inland country town as Ripon? What happens on Easter Sunday in such a great parish as Epworth-Euclid Methodist Church of Cleveland? How has Lent been celebrated at Christ Church, New York?

In other words, this study of contemporary Protestant practices should be suggestive to the parish minister for the new year. By enlarging his sights through this examination of what churches are doing, he will be able to bring to his own planning a new sense of imagination and significance.

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from page 25)

to be signed each Sunday recording the presence of the pledged members. Then at the end of the period all those who had been faithful through four Sundays were to receive a certificate of recognition. But the instructions for ordering suggested that while a pledge card and a token should be bought for each member of the church —meaning that one might expect nearly 100 per cent to promise to attend each Sunday during the campaign—only half as many certificates of recognition should be ordered. In other words, at most only half of those who promised to attend would actually keep their promise! Not too heartening a picture of our Kingdom loyalty.

The church cannot fulfill its divine mission without the loyalty of those who march under her banners. No agency can give you this Christian loyalty check. It must come from within you. "Let a man examine himself."—*W. Howard Lee, Memorial Presbyterian, St. Augustine, Fla.*

Religion Can Be Fun

TO some people religion is drudgery. They feel that it is necessary if heaven is to be attained, but that it is to be endured, not enjoyed. How different their viewpoint is from that of the author of the 95th Psalm who said, "O come, let us sing to the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!" He discovered that religion can be fun!

If you would like to get more enjoyment out of your religion, follow these suggestions:

First, make sure that your religion is something you value. If you don't prize your religious experiences or convictions, then you will not enjoy them. We enjoy only that which we hold to be valuable. If the faith you hold has no real experience of God in it, then it will be neither enjoyable nor real. A man traveling in the south once asked, "Do the people down here enjoy their religion?" "Them that has it does," was the answer.

Second, work at your religion. Many people lose the zest of their religion because they fail to practice it through their everyday life. If religion is to be enjoyable, a man must worship until God speaks to him and grants a sense of strength and peace of soul. He must sing to the glory of God. That was what the Psalmist wanted. A man who enjoys his religion is in communion with God. Out of his mind and heart he believes and declares his faith. A man who enjoys his religion is always learning more about his faith. He serves his God by doing good to "the least of these."

Third, let your religion dominate all of your life. Religion is not limited to churches or merely to the personal life of the individual. Religion, if real, must dominate all of a man's life—his business, his home, his private life and his recreation. When God guides a man throughout every phase of his life, then one can see how practical religion really is, how it affects everything that we do or say.

That is the kind of religion the Psalmist wanted people to have. Yes, religion can be fun!—*Norman Donald Newman, College Methodist, Cedarville, Ohio.*

Emurian

(Continued from page 27)

out of music exactly what we bring to it"—a point strangely absent from many a critic's musings.

Choir Ideas, by Flora Breck (W. A. Wilde, Boston, 144 pages, $2), consists mainly of reprints of articles appearing in Lorenz publications. The 23 brief chapters are prepared to assist the small church choir in doing things in addition to singing one anthem a Sunday.

ROUNDUP

Books in Brief

★★TREASURY OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD. Edited by **A. Gordon Nasby.** Harper, $4.95. American preachers have long expressed their admiration for the best preaching of English pulpits. This 400-page volume is an anthology of ideas and illustrations selected from 80 years of sermon publication in the British-edited *Christian World Pulpit* and the *Christian World.* In compiling the book, the editor condensed the best of some 18,000 sermons which appeared in these two publications. Ministers will find this volume, with its 10-page subject and author's index, a valuable resource for sermon building as well as for devotional enrichment. The book should have a wide audience on both sides of the Atlantic among both clergy and interested laymen.—*Alton M. Motter, Managing Editor, The Pulpit; Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

★★★★WITH GOD IN RED CHINA. By **F. Olin Stockwell.** Harper, $3.00. This story will do something to any American and any Christian who will stop long enough to read it. It was written on the margin of an anthology of poetry by a missionary while surviving through two years of solitary confinement and "brain-washing" in a Chinese Communist prison. The sheer human interest of this effectively written book will carry the reader through its pages. At the same time he will be treated to a fuller understanding of Communist strategy and the basis of those strange confessions of its victims. Also he will be introduced to the heart of a modern Christian who could take it and react with love alone. Best of all, he will share the rich insights into the New Testament which came to one who lived with it as almost sole companion for two years, and who discovered that it was written especially for men in "prison." —*Dwight Putman, Central Pennsylvania Lutheran Synod, Harrisburg, Pa.*

★★GREAT PROTESTANT FESTIVALS. By **Clarence Seidenspinner.** Schuman, $2.50. Pastors will find this an unusually helpful book in developing their worship services for a new church year. The author describes its contents on page 28.—*Alton M. Motter, Managing Editor, The Pulpit; Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

★★★PRIMER ON ROMAN CATHOLICISM FOR PROTESTANTS. By **Stanley I. Stuber.** Association Press, $2.50. This book makes an illuminating and sympathetic presentation of the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. It also considers, in an equally well-balanced and cogent way, the ruling principles maintained by Protestants. In a terse, clear manner, Dr. Stuber calls for a more reasonable understanding between these two faiths. He endeavors to present the facts so that, agreeing to differ and resolving to have good will toward each other, they may bear fruitful witness to Jesus Christ. Granted that this book contains much useful information, the effect it will have in furthering mutual understanding and united action is seriously open to question.—*Ray Freeman Jenney, Bryn Mawr Community Church, Chicago, Ill.*

SPIRITUAL RICHES OF JOHN BUNYAN. THE RULE AND EXERCISES OF HOLY DYING. By **Jeremy Taylor.** THE TABLE TALK OF MARTIN LUTHER. Edited (with introduction) by **Thomas S. Kepler.** World Publishing. These three books are in the uniform series of World devotional classics. Pocket size, clear in print and bound sturdily in red leatherette with gold title and insignia. They bring to the modern reader devotional writings which have by merit survived the centuries. Each provides an introduction giving a brief but vivid biographical sketch of the author whose meditations follow. The three books are selections from a series of which six have been already published and seven more are in preparation. The complete collection would make an admirable contribution to the devotional section of a young minister's library. The editor, Thomas S. Kepler, has done an admirable service to present-day Christians by making accessible—conveniently, attractively and inexpensively—the enduring testament of Christian faith.—*Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor Street United, Toronto, Canada.*

★CHRISTIANITY, RACE AND SOUTH AFRICAN PEOPLE REPORT. By **W. A. Visser't Hooft.** Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, National Council of Churches, 25 cents. What Dr. Visser't Hooft has well done in this report is to stake some of the racial issues of our time. This reviewer appreciates the forthright honesty of the report, not only as it affects the problem in Africa, but likewise as it challenges the conscience of the Christian church in America. The questions of South Africa—economic, social, philosophical and religious—are not all answered here; but in the attempt to answer them the Christian community confronts its most urgent responsibility. The use of such a report in discussion groups of the churches of America would help to clarify local responsibility as well as international concern.—*Ralph W. Loew, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Buffalo, N. Y.*

★TOMORROW IS YOURS. By **Orva Lee Ice.** Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.00. These 20 "talks to young people" are interesting, practical and reasonably fresh. There is no artificial effort to talk youth's "slanguage" and no talking down to young readers—sins of which many books for youth are guilty. Each talk is simple, to the point and well illustrated. Especially good use is made of poetry. The main value for ministers and others who speak regularly to youth groups is in patterns of thought, illustrations and homiletical style and example. It does not lend itself to "sermon lifters"—and that's good!—*Hoover Rupert, First Methodist, Jackson, Mich.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No Star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.

June	July	This Month	
6	4	1	**Ride the Wild Horses.** *J. Wallace Hamilton. Revell,* $2.50
8	5	2	**The Gospels.** *Translated by J. B. Phillips. Macmillan,* $2.75
	9	3	**With God in Red China.** *F. Olin Stockwell. Harper,* $3.00
7	6	4	**Here Is My Method.** *Donald Macleod. Revell,* $2.50
2	3	5	**Rediscovering Jesus.** *Jack Finegan. Association Press,* $2.50
10	7	6	**Communion Through Preaching.** *Henry Sloane Coffin. Scribners,* $2.50
	10	7	**Preaching on Controversial Issues.** *Harold A. Bosley. Harper,* $3.00
		8	**The Unfinished Reformation.** *Charles Clayton Morrison. Harper,* $3.00
		9	**Report from Christian Europe.** *Stewart Winfield Herman. Friendship Press,* $2.50
		10	**Sunday Evening Sermons.** *Edited by Alton M. Motter. Harper,* $2.00

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE NEWS VALUE will not be at once apparent in the announcement that three denominations wearing the Presbyterian name have agreed—to unite? No—merely to *study* a plan of union prepared by a joint commission. But this is indeed good news. For this is the way all progress in church union has been made in the past and will be made in the future. The general assemblies of the U.S.A., the U.S. and the United Presbyterian churches voted unanimously to study the matter for a year. Next year the three assemblies will be asked to submit the plan to their presbyteries for approval or disapproval. If approved by two-thirds (U.S.A. and U.P.) and by three-fourths (U.S.) of the presbyteries, the general assemblies of 1955 will then set the machinery in motion to consummate the union, probably in 1956. The church resulting from this merger would have a membership of 3,500,000. Opponents of the union are hard pressed to find reasons why it should not take place. It has been assumed that the chief opposition would be found in the south. This assumption is now suspect in view of the unanimity with which the southern assembly has taken the initial step. If I may express a personal opinion on the plan of union, I would say that it is much too elaborate a document. It consists of a book of over 200 pages. The attempt to anticipate so many details centers attention on marginal matters that should be left to common sense, to precedent, to parliamentary rules *and to faith.* Fortunately the doctrinal problem does not bulk large as between these three members of a common historical tradition for all of whom the Westminster Confession is either literally or flexibly accepted. It is in the area of non-theological questions that controversy is likely to arise. But one of these, until recently regarded as the main one, the race question, is not likely to produce more tension in the united church than each of the three denominations now experiences by itself.

Presbyterians Agree to Study Plan of Union

The Book of the Month

RELIGION AS SALVATION, *by Harris Franklin Rall. Abingdon-Cokesbury, $3.00.*

THIS is a book of systematic theology. In it Dr. Rall presents what I would call a theology of common sense. By this I do not suggest that such a theology is different in kind from a more philosophical one. The difference is that a common sense theology does not push out to the extreme limits of refined thought, as a more thoroughgoing treatise does; it stops short before it gets beyond the understanding of the ordinary intelligent reader; it leaves certain questions unanswered. Dr. Rall's book must be read and judged with this in mind. I do not know of a comprehensive statement of the Christian faith that would prove more readable and helpful to the average reader—layman or minister—than this book. The author has the rare gift, possessed by few of his theological peers, of speaking on deep subjects in a manner that most of us can understand. He defines salvation in ethical terms as "life through right relations and for right relations," including "the supreme relation of life, that of man to God." That this is a true statement, no one could deny, but as a definition of salvation it seems to me to omit something essential. Dr. Rall owes us another book, one in which he will interpret—if only to reject—what the "neo-orthodox" theologians mean by salvation, and more fully justify his own view. He could do this for the common sense reader better than any theologian I know.

A Thought for the Month

CONSIDER the effect of the denominational system upon our witness to the Christian faith. No denomination can think in categories large enough to express the full range and majesty of the gospel. The denominational mind is necessarily narrow, provincial and short sighted. The Protestant spirit has been the victim of a great delusion. It is the assumption that, when a new truth or fresh insight emerges from the Word of God, a separate church must be set up to conserve and propagate it. Our whole denominational system is built upon this assumption. But the history of Protestant sectarianism proves that this is a delusion. The effect is just the contrary. There is no surer way to keep a Christian truth out of circulation than to build a sectarian wall around it. If it is a genuine truth, it would fare better were it allowed to stand on its merits in the free fellowship of the ecumenical church. Once a truth is sectarianized, it raises barriers of prejudice and pride against its acceptance by others. A denomination not only shuts its own truth in but shuts other truth out. It also, inevitably, shuts its own errors in. Its errors are entrenched and its trivialities are magnified by the party spirit of the denomination. Thus, sectarianism isolates truth and coddles error. Because the denomination is but a fragment of the true church, its feeling and vision of the whole gospel is necessarily truncated. The full witness to the Christian faith finds no adequate expression in the "broken lights"—the creeds and ideologies—of the denominational system. It needs the very diversities of our apprehension for its full expression.

Denominations and Christian Truth

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

OUR August issue for the last several years has been creating an unusual degree of interest among our readers. This is primarily because since 1951 this midsummer number has been designated as our annual denominational issue. Two years ago we featured the sermons of *Methodist* preachers. Last year the *Disciples* were represented, while in this issue outstanding *Lutheran* sermons are printed. The *Presbyterians* will have their turn in 1954.

To select the best six sermons from the large number of top Lutheran nominations made by our readers was no easy assignment. If our readers could have had their way, we would have published a greatly enlarged August edition of The Pulpit in which sermons by the following 22 Lutheran pastors would have appeared: Harold R. Albert, George Aus, Conrad Bergendoff, Oscar F. Blackwelder, Richard R. Caemmerer, Edgar M. Carlson, Jacob A. Dell, Charles B. Foelsch, Franklin Clark Fry, O. A. Geiseman, T. F. Gullixson, Robert D. Hershey, Elmer S. Hjortland, T. A. Kantonen, A. R. Kretzmann, O. P. Kretzmann, Gerhard E. Lenski, Ralph W. Loew, Clifford Ansgar Nelson, Paul E. Scherer, Joseph Sittler, Jr. and Reuben K. Youngdahl.

Not all of these men were able to accept our invitation to submit sermon manuscripts. Some were involved in schedules which made it impossible to meet our editorial deadline; several were abroad at the time our invitation was issued; and a few manuscripts dealt with seasonal topics which we felt should be held for publication in a later and more appropriate issue.

This still gave us more sermons than we can print in these 32 pages. However, we hope our readers will concur in our judgment that these sermons are representative of the best of contemporary Lutheran preaching. They are *gospel-centered* and *Christ-related*—two phrases which have described Lutheran preaching since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, most of these sermons are also *life-related*—a description which has not always applied to Lutheran preaching. As a matter of fact, if we were to point to the greatest weakness of historical Lutheran preaching, it would be in the area of the application of the gospel to both personal and social needs.

As we look at our times, we believe that modern preaching requires the deep theological roots which have generally characterized Lutheran preaching *plus* something else. That something else is the ability to translate the great doctrinal truths of Christianity in understandable terms to the men, women and youth of our day and age. Lutheran preachers—like all preachers today—face the crucial task of *communicating* the gospel. A.M.M.

The Pulpit

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